

the chronicle

**BETTY'S BIG DEAL
WITH TV STAR NOEL
EDMONDS**
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Council says it's ready for any weather

Gritters are on standby in the Black Country in preparation for a long and cold winter, with some councils extending the gritting service to cover pay and display car parks.

Council bosses in Dudley said they were "fully prepared" for "anything the weather throws at them".

Transport chief Councillor Patrick Harley said a system was in place where the weather could be monitored hour-by-hour and teams sent out if temperatures plummeted.

Gritting trucks in Wyre Forest went on standby last weekend – ready to swing into action if winter strikes early.

Around 15,000 tons of salt is in stock and ready to be used at Worcestershire County Council – the authority's biggest stockpile in its history – in anticipation of snow predicted by forecasters within weeks.

This year Sandwell Council has bought an extra 570 tons of gritting salt to make sure it can cope with the predicted freezing conditions and now has 6,950 tons of rock salt stockpiled at a cost of £228,000.

Councillor Derek Rowley, said: "We're well prepared as we have been for previous winters."

"We have a very dedicated staff of gritters who do an excellent job – which I am sure they will continue to do this winter – to keep the roads of Sandwell safe."

He added: "We're actually improving the gritting service and we will be including gritting of pay and display car parks, additional salt bins and additional roads included in the priority network for salting."

Councils across the Black Country say they will be checking forecasts on a daily basis to make sure the most effective and appropriate treatment is put in place.

In Wolverhampton highways chiefs have stockpiled a third more salt than last year.

Bosses have received 4,232 tons at a cost of £145,000 this year, up from 3,500 tons and a spend of £115,000 last year. A further 400 tons is on order and gritting trucks are on standby to respond to up-to-the-minute weather reports.

460 workers have gone in cutbacks

A total of 460 staff have been shed by Dudley Council as part of cost-cutting measures to make savings of more than £22 million in the present financial year.

Figures presented to a meeting of the authority's cabinet last week showed 56 employees had left the authority through compulsory redundancy.

The remaining 404 staff requested voluntary redundancy which was supported by senior managers and agreed by council bosses.

It has removed 314 full-time equivalent posts from the council with a further 129.2 positions achieved by not filling vacancies and another 41.49 by redeploying staff into other positions. This places the total amount of full-time equivalent posts removed at 485. In January the council said it would need to axe around 460 such posts. The highest number of compulsory redundancies was in the children's services department with 42 staff axed. Members of the cabinet agreed the report and authorised officials to look at further redundancies for the coming financial year. Councillor Tim Wright, deputy leader of the council, said: "Trade unions were consulted and were pleased with the council's efforts to reduce compulsory redundancies through the voluntary redundancy programme."

Mike hot from Sahara challenge

Marathon man Mike Crannage has returned from his epic 155-mile charity run through the Sahara Desert.

The 52-year-old, who is one of Dudley Council's mayoral attendants, ran six marathons in six days through one of the hottest climates in the world.

He braved dangers during his trip including deadly snakes, soaring temperatures and hazardous terrain to complete



Mike Crannage during his Sahara Desert challenge

the gruelling challenge. His run started on October 9 and he finished six days later. During the run he was completely alone and slept out in the desert.

Mr Crannage flew back from his trip on Saturday, and was back at work on Monday.

"It was hard going, but you see some amazing sights like a café in the middle of the desert and camels wandering up to you in the middle of nowhere."

"But the main thing is hopefully I can raise a lot of money for charity. It's not too late, you can still donate online," said Mr Crannage, who lives in Dudley Wood.

Challenge

The challenge comes just a year after a trek through the Arctic in temperatures as low as minus 30 degrees Celsius, from which he raised thousands for the Mayor of Dudley's charities.

The latest challenge aims to pull in cash for the Dudley Group of Hospitals Charity, raising much needed funds for their Leukaemia patients and The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA).

Rentokil Initial plc, based at Castlegate Way, Dudley, are among those who donated to the sponsorship fund and handed over a donation of £800.

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Michael Evans said: "I'm delighted Mike is back safe and sound, and I'm hugely grateful to him for the challenge which will, I am sure, raise some much needed funds."

Anyone wishing to sponsor Mr Crannage can log on to <http://mikecrannage.com>. People can also email him at mike.crannage@dudley.gov.uk



Mike Crannage who has completed six marathons

Restoration bid for canal under threat

A project to restore a stretch of canal which runs from Halesowen to Birmingham is under threat after developers pulled the plug on the scheme.

It had been hoped the disused five and a half mile section of the Dudley No 2 canal, known as the Lapal Canal, could be brought back to life. The canal runs from Halesowen to Selly Oak.

Plans to reinstate a small stretch of the canal had been included in plans drawn up by Sainsbury's for a new store in Selly Oak. These were approved by Birmingham City Council five years ago.

It was hoped this would kick-start further restoration work along the rest of the canal.

But now the supermarket giant, along with development partner Land Securities, is working on revised plans which no longer include the restoration work.

Disappointment

Roy Burgess, chairman of the Hales Owen Abbey Trust spoke of his disappointment after being told the project would no longer be going ahead as part of the Sainsbury's scheme.

"The restoration of the five and a half mile derelict canal is of vital importance in terms of leisure, recreation and economic growth," he said.

"The recent announcement by Sainsbury's to abandon their previous commitment to fully restore that section of canal associated with their approved store is a disappointment," added Mr Burgess.

Instead Sainsbury's and Land Securities are proposing a pedestrian route leading from the canal side across the development through to Selly Oak Park.

The plans have gone out for consultation and a planning application will be submitted to the city council at a later date.

Sainsbury's spokeswoman Tess Randle said: "While the current scheme does not include the restoration of the Lapal Canal, sufficient space will be allocated along a proposed pedestrian 'greenway'."

Food 6 months past use-by date

A former shop owner has received a conditional discharge after mouldy food – including a chicken sandwich more than six months past its use-by date – was found at her premises.

Mehwish Kauser, aged 20, pleaded guilty to 19 charges of selling food after the use-by date at Dudley Magistrates Court.

The court was told trading standards officers had swooped on the Kal and Brothers store, Church Street, Pensnett, on February 7 this year in regards to other matters.

But while there they checked food on display and inside a fridge and items such as sausages 23 days past the use-by date, cheese 57 days out-of-date and a chicken sandwich which was 213 days past its use-by date.

Magistrates were told Kauser, of Blackacre Road, Dudley, has sold on the business. Alongside the conditional discharge, which will run for two years, she was also ordered to pay costs of £3,233.

The court heard that at the time officials arrived at the business Kauser had not been involved in its day-to-day running since 2009. Miss Neelam Bangar, prosecuting, said: "The majority of the food items found were in a fridge but there were some other items on display elsewhere in the shop."

"Officers were told a sign had been placed on the fridge telling customers the items in there were not for sale. However, this was said to have been removed by children."

Civil proceedings started against hit-and-run driver

WIDOW WILL TAKE ACTION OVER KILLER

The widow of a Tividale grandfather who says the hit-and-run driver who killed him didn't show a shred of decency towards her husband, has launched a civil action against him.



The late David Rudge and his widow Kath from Tividale

David Rudge died of complications to injuries he sustained after his motorcycle was hit head-on by a

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Jaguar being driven by hair salon boss Clive Robinson, of Brierley Hill. His car had drifted on to the wrong side of the road and he left the scene of the crash in Portway Road, Oldbury.

As Robinson started a two-year jail sentence, Mr Rudge's widow Kath said: "I find it very difficult to forgive him after he behaved with total disregard."

"He showed not a single shred of human decency by leaving the scene without stopping to help Dave."

Unanswered

"There are still so many unanswered questions about the circumstances of the collision. Why he was on the wrong side of the road and why he felt unable to hand himself into the police much earlier."

"Dave was a fantastic role model for his four kids, step-children and grandchildren who idolised him. He never swore or

argued." Mrs Rudge, who was married to her 57-year-old husband for 21 years, added: "He loved to ride his bike and had completely stripped and sprayed it last year but when I went to see him in hospital and mentioned the machine, he said: 'No more. Never again' which was very sad because the crash had taken away his enjoyment."

"We were making plans for retirement and thinking of buying a camper van and just heading off together. The man who did this has taken my soul mate – my future – but somehow we need to find the strength to move on with our lives but there is not a minute of the day when we do not miss Dave and grieve his loss."

The family's solicitor Miss Rebecca Hearsey, said: "Now that criminal proceedings have been concluded, it is important that we pursue a separate civil case to provide some degree of financial security for those left behind." Robinson, of Stourbridge Road, was banned from driving for four years on Monday.

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New Tesco superstore welcomes first shoppers



From left, Paul Jaunzems, from the Langstone Society, store manager Steve Goswell, Julie Goodwin, from The Zone, Dudley, and Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Michael Evans.

Its slogan may be Every Little Helps but there is nothing little about Tesco's new Dudley superstore which opened its doors this week.

Covering a space of 140,000 sq ft, the sprawling Tesco Extra on Burnt Tree Island is a new landmark for the borough.

Thousands of shoppers have passed through the doors of the new £27 million store since it opened on Monday.

And they have given it their seal of approval. The supermarket includes

a Dominos Pizza, beauty salon and a dedicated technology zone selling TVs, iPods and other equipment. There is also a Timpson dry cleaners and cobblers is also based at the store along with a Max Spielman photo concession and a cafe.

The first customers through the doors at 8am on Monday were retired firefighter Dave Birch and his wife Ruth, who had queued outside the store since 3am waiting for it to open.

The couple from, from Common Road, Wombourne, were given a round of applause by staff gathered



The first shoppers at the Tesco store start filling their trolleys

on the shop floor as they entered by one of the store's escalators.

"They were given a bottle of champagne, a box of chocolates, flowers and a Domino's voucher to mark the occasion.

Regular

Mr Birch, 51, said they had been regular shoppers at the old Tesco supermarket on the site which closed in January to make way for the new store.

"The scale of the new building is amazing," he said. "It will mean a lot

for this area, both in terms of jobs and simply bringing people into this area. You don't realise just how big the new store is until you see inside it."

Fellow customers Roderick and Kath Ruff, of Oldbury, said they were impressed by the look of the new store.

Mr Ruff, 54, said: "We usually shop elsewhere but we heard this store was opening and decided to have a look."

"They have done a great job on the building. It looks superb and the staff are very helpful, which is vital for a store of this size."

The store was officially opened in a

ceremony led by Dudley's Mayor Councillor Michael Evans and long-term Tesco employee Anne Shinton.

Work on the new store has taken more than six months to complete after the original store, created in 1992, closed in January.

Construction

Demolition of the old supermarket ended in March for construction of the new store to begin.

Store manager Steve Goswell said: "My team and I would like to thank everyone involved in the opening of the new store and all the customers who came along this morning."



The addition to the Dudley skyline is the Tesco extra superstore on Burnt Tree Island.



The technology zone in the Dudley superstore

"We have had a very positive reaction from customers and I would like to thank all the staff who worked very hard to get the store ready to open."

The store employs around 300 people. Around 80 of the positions have been newly created while the others are employees who used to work at the Tesco supermarket on the site which was pulled down earlier this year to make way for the new building.

The new store will open at 6am every Monday and will remain open 24 hours a day until midnight on Saturdays. The store will open on Sunday from 10am until 4pm.

Vote, vote, vote!

Chronicle Christmas Card Challenge

The Chronicle Crew set school kids from Blackheath Primary School the Chronicle Christmas Card Challenge and on pages 20 and 21 we have printed their superb designs. Now all we want you to do, is choose your favourite and send your nomination to us. The designer with the most votes will be presented with their Christmas Card, framed and will receive a set of cards to send out to their family and friends.

As part of the prize, the Chronicle will donate £50 towards the School Funds

Please send your completed nomination form to:
Chronicle Christmas Card Challenge
Emma Parkes, Halesowen Chronicle Advertising Department
Black Lake, West Bromwich, B70 0QB
Thank you for voting!

Closing date for nominations is Friday 28th October 2011. Nominations from under 16s will require a parent's/guardian's signature. Photocopies of this nomination form will not be accepted. Only one nomination per household. Competition entrants may not vote for their own entry. The winner will be the child with the most entries. In the event of a tie an independent Chronicle representative will decide.

Chronicle Christmas Card Challenge Nominaton Form

Winning entry (card number)

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Turn to pages 20 and 21 to view entries

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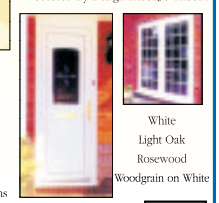
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Noel makes big deal of Betty's surprise

Noel Edmonds gave a Wordsley great-grandmother the shock of her life when he turned up at her social club – and revealed she was to be filmed live on Deal or No Deal.

Unsuspecting Betty Burns was at a dance class at the Royal British Legion club in Kingswinford when the television presenter crept up behind her.

The 78-year-old and her pals travelled down to Bristol on Monday of last week for what was only the second in a new series of shows recorded in front of a live audience.

She appeared on the hit programme the next day – but despite having several chances at taking home thousands of pounds, she ended up with £250 after swapping her box with the banker's.

Dance

Edmonds turned up to surprise Betty the previous Monday.

Mrs Burns, of Wordsley, was preparing for a weekly sequence dance group she helps run at the club in Summerhill, which is regularly attended by more than 30 members.

The mother-of-two, who has been married to husband Frank for 60 years, was getting the music ready for the session when Noel walked in through a back door. He greeted her with the words "Are you Betty Burns who loves Deal or No Deal?" to which she replied "I do".

He then turned her around and she hugged him, before he asked her: "Would you like to be on the show?"

"Wouldn't I just?" she replied, before answering the question: "Deal or no deal?" with the response: "Deal."

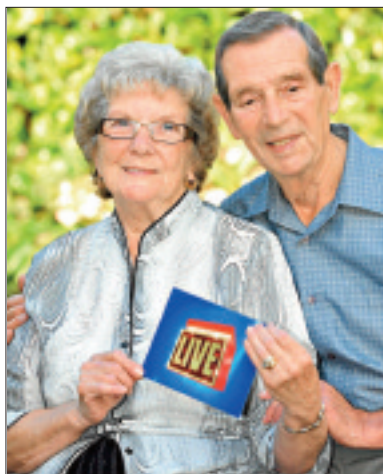
Mrs Burns took along Frank and some of her friends to open the boxes in the studio – while a crowd was filmed watching the live show inside the club.

She declined offers from the banker of £7,000 and £10,000, before finally turning down £6,000 when she got down to the final two boxes, one containing £20,000 and the other containing £250.

Betty, who is now back at home, said: "Somewhere up there I knew all along that I would have £250, so I'm not disappointed. I have loved every minute and no body can take this away from me."



Betty gets a surprise visit from Noel at the British Legion club



Betty Burns and husband Frank who recently celebrated 60 years of marriage



Noel reveals that Betty has just £250 in her chosen box

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Axe is ready to fall on one-way scheme

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A controversial one-way system in Dudley could be scrapped within weeks as residents step up their campaign against it. Residents say the system in Parkway Road, Dudley has created huge queues and left the area gridlocked.

The new plans are to be advertised this week and hundreds of residents are expected to contact Dudley Council in support. Once that is over highways chiefs will look to start working on getting the signs and markings removed to free up traffic in the town.

Locals have fought ever since the system was installed a year ago. They collected a 400-name petition and complained to Government watchdog the Local Government Ombudsman.

Bill Chambers who lives in nearby Fullbrook Road, has been leading protests.

Complained

Parkway Road was made one-way in January after some residents complained it was a rat run.

He claims emergency vehicles struggle to get through at peak times.

Mr Chambers wrote to the Ombudsman claiming the views of residents were not taken into account before the road was made one-way.

Queues are stretching along Grange Road, which joins with Parkway Road and runs down busy Salop Street. Motorists who used to cut through Parkway Road to Himley Road now have to make their way further up Grange Road.

He said: "We have shown if you keep fighting the people in charge will have to listen and make changes."

Councillor Patrick Harley, cabinet member for transportation, said: "In due course a scheme to remove the one way system and a plan to stop traffic turning right into Himley Road will be advertised."

In the pink for campaign



Front, Marion Griffiths, with cancer specialist Dr Vijay Ganesh, donning pink at the Breast Cancer Care group at Dudley Cancer Support

Volunteers at a Black Country cancer charity donned pink for the day to raise awareness of their monthly meetings.

About 30 women of all ages gather each month at Dudley Cancer Support at The White House in Ednam Road.

The Breast Cancer Care group's events give cancer sufferers the chance to speak to people in similar

situations. Members, volunteers and staff all wore pink clothing to mark national Breast Cancer Awareness Month. They were joined by staff from Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

Organiser Marion Griffiths, who was first diagnosed with breast cancer 21 years ago, said: "We do anything we can to make their lives a bit easier and it is so important to our members."

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Tesco close to starting work

Plans to demolish part of a rear extension of Stourbridge's Town Hall have been lodged by Tesco as the firm moves closer to starting work on a new £50million development.

The application for listed building consent is the next stage in preparatory work needed before construction can start in the new year.

Under the £50 million plans, Tesco will rebuild major sections of Crown Shopping Centre, where the town hall is based, creating shops with office space above. The multi-storey car park in Bell Street will be demolished.

It will be replaced with a supermarket and a 550-space underground car

park. Documents submitted with the plans for the town hall say it only involves a modern extension and, therefore, will not impact on the historic hall.

The proposals also include a temporary management office. An exact start date for construction work has yet to be announced as it is thought details over road closures are still being hammered out.

Dudley Council has confirmed there will be no major building work this year as it wants to wait until after Christmas so as to avoid disruption for businesses in the town during the busy trading period.

Councillor Angus Adams, cabinet

member for regeneration, said: "We are continuing discussions with Tesco in relation to specific timescales. While preparatory works will take place in the coming months, there will be no major work on the project until the new year." The scheme was given the go-ahead in February this year and will create 400 jobs. It is expected to bring local traders an extra £200,000 a week.

Stourbridge Register office will shut in the next few weeks to make way for the development.

Council bosses say they are looking at providing some services elsewhere in Stourbridge to save people having to go to Dudley.

Internet service for residents

At the click of a button residents in Dudley can now access all of the important information about their neighbourhood.

A simple postcode search on the Dudley Council website will provide residents with information on schools, waste and recycling, planning permission and local amenities.

Whether residents are interested in their nearest schools or are seeking information on their local councillors, the easy-to-use service has everything to hand.

Councillor David Blood, cabinet member responsible for ICT, said: "This excellent tool on the Dudley Council website can provide residents with all the information they need to know about services in their local neighbourhood."

"When searching for information on local schools or waste and recycling sites, this quick and easy search engine can be very useful."

People can access the My Neighbourhood service by clicking the link on the left hand side of the homepage at www.dudley.gov.uk

Magical touch to help hospice

A charity gig featuring music, magic and comedy is being held in Stourbridge later this month in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice.

It has been organised by musician James Firkins and the owners of the town's Scary Canary clothing shop Stacey Smith and Steve Pilcher.

It will take place in the upstairs of the Victoria Passage shop on October 20 from 7.30pm.

The evening will include a number of solo and duo performances from members of local bands as well as an appearance by Al Rudge, a comedian and magician.

Inspired

Mr Firkins said the event had been organised after his father David passed away at the age of 50.

He was cared for at Mary Stevens Hospice and his son said they were inspired to do something to help the good work being done by all the staff.

Mr Pilcher added: "It should be a really good event. We'd love to see as many people there as possible."

Tickets are £3 with funds raised going to the hospice and can only be purchased in advance via the store.



Ryan Peters, Stacey Smith, Luke Fewtrell and James Firkins get ready for a charity show of music, magic and comedy in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice

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thechronicle

Metal theft bid 'like the Keystone Cops'

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

A would-be metal thief caught trying to steal sections of railway track from a disused line in the Black Country tried to give police the slip in scenes likened to a slapstick film, a court heard.

Police waited for Aaron Anslow at both ends of the mile-long Dudley Tunnel for an hour, but he still managed to escape. The 25-year-old father-of-two had been cutting up 650ft of track in the tunnel near New Road, Netherton.

He was aided by a 17-year-old accomplice, Dudley magistrates were told last week. Officers spotted a van parked nearby and passers-by reported seeing flashing lights in the tunnel.

After somehow escaping, the pair were found hiding behind a lorry in Castlegate Park, Dudley.

When officers arrived at the tunnel at about 10.30am on December 28, Anslow's Staffordshire bull terrier barked and stopped them entering, said Miss Maxine McIntosh, prosecuting.

The pet then ran away when a police dog arrived. But, despite officers guarding each exit, they soon realised the pair had managed to get out.

Cutting

Later two canisters were found connected to a cutting torch along with other cutting equipment, the court was told.

None of the pieces of track had been loaded on to the van.

Anslow, of Stourbridge Road, Dudley, claimed he had been asked to cut the track by a man he met in a pub.

Mr Dennis Dudley, defending, said: "It was like something from The Keystone Cops with police waiting outside a tunnel for a man and his dog. Somehow they got away."

He said that the track had not been used for up to 30 years, but it had not been ruled out that it could be used again.

The 17-year-old was dealt with at a previous hearing. Anslow, who pleaded guilty to attempted theft, was given a 12-month community order and told to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work and pay £250 costs.



Aaron Anslow

Ciao time at restaurant



Co-owner Fred Bartram receives the keys to the Bellagio from designer Anthony Bowen

A £1 million Italian restaurant has opened in a Dudley retail park, creating 30 new jobs.

The new Bellagio restaurant has welcomed its first customers following months of planning and building work at Castle Gate Retail Park. The official opening was last week.

The building, which seats 150, has been built on the retail site rather than taking over an existing unit. It has taken six months to create and follows the successful opening of the first Bellagio restaurant in West Bromwich

around 18 months ago. It includes a separate bar to accommodate 100.

Co-owner Fred Bartram said: "Developing this site has cost more than £1 million which is a significant investment in this part of Dudley. It is an excellent location and we hope the restaurant will bring in even more people to this part of the town."

"The building has been specially designed and built to meet the criteria we wanted and we are delighted with the new restaurant."

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Councillor Adrian Turner outside the old Mount Pleasant School where the borough's most important historical documents are housed and, right, an artist's impression of the proposed new archives building



Setting the records straight on borough's £6m archives service

MOST of the windows are bricked up – but inside an uninviting shell of a building are some of the Black Country's greatest treasures, dating back to a document signed by the Pope in 1182.

The documents housed in Dudley's Archives and Local History Service give a fascinating insight into the lives of the borough's citizens, businesses, churches and civic leaders throughout the turbulent centuries.

Now the archives themselves are at the centre of some controversy – with the service due to move into £6 million state-of-the-art new premises next to the Black Country Living Museum, opposed by local campaigners who want to keep the records in its current base in a Victorian school building at Coseley.

The gems stored within hundreds of thousands of documents at the school include the papal "bull" – short for "bulla", the Latin term for a seal – signed by Pope Lucius III in 1182 granting permission for Dudley's Priory to be built.

Also there is the original design by landscape gardener Capability Brown for the grounds of Himley Hall – and the original pricing list and bill of sale, down to the last halfpenny, for the Titanic anchor, built by Noah Hingley and Sons in Netherthorpe.

The site is popular with members of the public who visit to learn more about the history of the area and even their own family.

Census

Retired maintenance man Derek Knowles has spent the last 10 years "trying to find" his great great grandfather.

Mr Knowles aged 67, of Southfield Grove, Wolverhampton, visits the archives several times a year to check census and parish church records on microfilm in the hunt for more information about Thomas Knowles for a family tree he is building up.

"Once you've started on this trail it's like a drug and you just can't stop," said Mr Knowles.

At least 20 people a day visit the archives centre and, at times, it is so busy that appointments have to be made for visitors to come in.

Dudley planners gave the go-ahead last week and work on the Tipton Road site is expected to start January next year and is set to be opened in Summer 2013.

But first large-scale groundwork is needed to get rid of potentially dangerous gases and contamination.

Councillors said the hi-tech building was much-needed to help with the town's regeneration.

The Mount Pleasant School archives site will be redeveloped for housing. Protesters, including Dudley North MP Ian Austin, say the council had not done enough to explore the possibility of extending and improving

As approval is finally given for Dudley's new archive centre, **LOUISE JEW** has a look at some of the treasures it will hold



The oldest document in the archives, the papal bull, signed by Pope Lucius III in 1182, granting permission for Dudley's priory to be built



Robert Loach looks through records at the Mount Pleasant centre

the facilities at Mount Pleasant.

With loan repayments, the total cost to taxpayers of the £6 million building will be £13.8 million but council planning officers and archives staff say the school building does not provide the right environment to control the humidity and temperature required for the storage of old documents.

Protect

The bricked up, unwelcoming facade of the school, which still has its entrances for "boys" and "girls", is necessary to protect its contents from light that could damage the documents inside.

The proposed, purpose-built archives centre will include a new high-tech

conservation studio, educational facilities, the right environment for storing the documents and enough space for the next 25 years' worth of documents.

Kate Millin, Black Country Library Services project manager, said: "We have outgrown the space available here and we know that refurbishing and extending an old building like this would cost more than a new building."

Councillor Adrian Turner, cabinet member for housing, libraries and adult learning, added: "These archives have been given to us in good faith by people and they expect that we will look after them and make them available for people that follow us."

"In years to come, when even our children won't be here, the records will still be around provided we look after them properly."

The plans were unanimously approved by Dudley Council's development control committee.

Committee chairman Councillor Colin Wilson said: "I have never known a set of plans to tick all the right boxes like this."

Superb

"The state-of-the-art technology of this building is superb and it will preserve the area's history for generations to come."

Building work will now get under way in the coming weeks and it is expected to be completed by summer 2013. But potentially dangerous ground gases and "significant" land contamination have been found at the site, with large-scale groundwork needed before construction can begin.

Work to demolish the old Royal Brierley Crystal building began earlier this month, and investigations into the ground contamination will be carried out when the site has been fully cleared.

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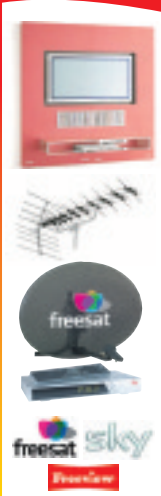
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Black Country Libraries project manager Kate Millin, left, Councillor Adrian Turner and local studies librarian Diane Matthews look at the plans by Capability Brown for the gardens in Himley Park which are dated 1774

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Miss Challoner of Wolverhampton

thechronicle

Pub in jeopardy over outdoor drinks ban

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

A notorious pub that was forced to shut for three months amid complaints over noise faces an uncertain future after customers were banned from drinking outside the front or side of the premises.

The Painters Arms in Coseley will focus on serving food when it re-opens in November after being closed for three months for holding late-night discos. Owner Graham Watkins withdrew plans to open until 2am when locals objected.

However, he wanted conditions changed allowing drinkers to stand out at the front and smoke. Dudley Council licensing bosses rejected his application and 56-year-old Mr Watkins now says he could struggle to keep the business going as he fears customers will be put off.

He said there had been "confrontations" with punters when he had asked them not to take their drinks outside.

Although the pub has a beer garden at the back, Mr Watkins told councillors that it is difficult to access and claims people have always stood outside the front entrance.

Members of the council's licensing sub-committee recently said they were concerned that groups of people congregating outside would create too much noise.

Review

But they agreed to review the application in six months after the pub has re-opened.

Mr Watkins said: "There's so many restrictions on the pub now that it is making it very difficult to make the business viable."

"I am trying to make the pub a success and we just need some help."

"With complaints about music, we can just turn it off, but it is hard to stop people talking when they stand outside."

"We will come back as a pub mainly selling food and see how it goes but it will be an uncertain six months."

The pub is adjacent to residents' homes and the new Extra Care retirement village being built in the town.

The licensing committee forced the pub to close on August 10 and abide by numerous conditions before it could re-open following a string of complaints. They include fitting a noise limiter to the pub's jukebox.

Love in the air at hall



Claire Green admires the wedding dresses at Himley Hall

It is a venue fit for royalty, and now Himley Hall is aiming to tempt more couples to have their wedding at the historic setting.

The Grade II listed house staged a wedding fair to showcase ideas for couples tying the knot. A range of stalls were set up allowing people to browse for anything from wedding dresses to styling tips. Designers held a show for brides-to-be to see what dresses were on offer.

Lucy Jordan and Gareth Elwell, both aged 29, from Tack Farm Road, Wordsley, will be celebrating their big day at 18th century house next September. "We have always loved Himley Hall and its setting so it was a natural choice for us to have our wedding here," said Lucy.

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thechronicle

£120m plan goes to council next month

Plans to create up to 1,300 new jobs, 200 homes and a brand new supermarket as part of a £120 million scheme in Coseley will be lodged next month, it has recently emerged.

Under the proposals, a 66-acre site stretching between the Birmingham New Road and Sedgley Road West will be redeveloped with new business units to house new and existing companies.

A community hall and full-size football pitch would also be created along with a food store, retail warehouse and a specialist shop.

A series of public meetings giving residents and businesses the chance to comment on the proposals were held last month.

Simon Lawrence, spokesman for the site's owner, Skelton Group Investments, said the response to the Coseley Eco Park scheme had been positive and plans were expected to be submitted to Dudley Council next month.

"We had a very successful three days of exhibition

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

events with around 120 visitors coming to view the plans and speak to the project team," he said.

Investment

"The overwhelming majority of those who attended were positive about the plans and the general mood was one of welcoming the new jobs and investment in the area. "The fact that Coseley has seen very little of this type of investment over the years meant that the local community were excited to see something happening."

"It was near universally recognised that the site could not continue as it is at the moment."

The site is currently home to around 30 manufacturing and light industrial business employing about 120 people on Newey Business Park, Wellington Industrial Estate and Bean Road Industrial Estates.

The number of firms has fallen over the past few years with large employers such as Blackburn Metals, relocating to other sites in the borough.

The site's owners say between 400 and 500 new jobs would be created by the new food store and wholesale warehouse while around 300 posts would be made available during the construction phase. It is hoped the rest of the new jobs can come from the park attracting new businesses.

Shadihur curries favour with judges



Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, chef Shahidur Rahman from Raj Spice Restaurant with his son Wahidur and daughter Rabiya and Rt Hon Frank Dobson MP

A CHEF from Rowley Regis has won a top award for his curries.

Chef Shahidur Rahman, from the Raj Spice, Rowley Regis, was a special guest at Curry Life Magazine's best Curry Chef Awards at The Cumberland Hotel in London.

Chef Shahidur is no stranger to awards having previously won a British Curry Award and British Fusion Food Festival Award. His restaurant Raj Spice has been included in the UK Top 100 Restaurants.

He has been creating his particular brand of magic with authentic Bangladeshi cuisine at the popular venue in Halesowen Street for 14 years, having worked in Indian restaurants since the age of 16.

Excellence

The Curry Life Magazine, widely regarded as the authoritative voice for thousands of Indian Restaurants in the UK, recognises excellence in the industry.

Chef Shahidur said: "I am absolutely delighted. We've always been very proud of our food here at Raj Spice and it's a great honour to be named the best Curry Chef in my area."

More than 300 guests attended the prestigious awards ceremony. Syed Ahmed, one of Sir Alan Sugar's former contestants on The Apprentice, presented the awards.

The guest speaker was Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities, who said: "Curry may not have been born in Britain but it has found a welcome home here."

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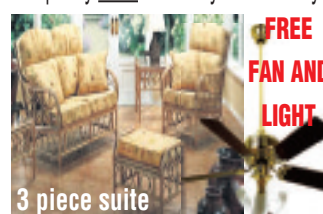
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thechronicle

MP backs Commons campaign

The hemorrhaging of jobs in the manufacturing sector is further proof that the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition's economic policy is not working, a Black Country Labour MP has recently claimed.

Ian Austin has signed a Commons petition calling on the Government to defend manufacturing jobs and support economic regeneration in former industrial areas like the West Midlands.

The petition was launched following the recent announcement by defence giant BAE Systems to make nearly 3,000 job cuts at a number of United

Kingdom-wide sites including factories in Lancashire and East Yorkshire. BAE employs around 100,000 people worldwide, including 40,000 in Britain.

The company has already announced plans to axe its factory in Wolverhampton, which is set to close by the end of this year.

Evidence

Mr Austin said: "Job creation must be the Government's number one priority."

"But the loss of 3,000 jobs at BAE Systems is further evidence that the

Government's economic policy is just not working.

"We need a plan of action to retain these key, advanced skills in the UK economy and to provide some certainty for industry."

"The defence industry is vital to ensuring the UK's historic manufacturing base is strong and sustainable."

"Defence Secretary Liam Fox proudly boasted last week that the Ministry of Defence had balanced its budget."

"But that will be no consolation to the many families who have been dealt a body blow by this news."

Former nightclub at auction

A former Dudley nightclub which closed shortly after a reveller had the tip of her finger bitten off on the dance floor is set to go under the hammer later this month.

Fusion has been shut for 12 years and is being auctioned off on October 20.

The club has a guide price set at £100,000.

The boarded up club in Martin Hill Street has had a controversial past.

Row

In 1999 a Cradley Heath reveller had part of her finger bitten off during a heated row with another clubber.

Shortly afterwards, the nightclub closed due to financial reasons and has never re-opened.

The 13,000 sq ft building has been included in an auction being run by Cottons at Villa Park.

The controversial nightclub was formerly called Goldsmiths which opened back in 1987.

It later became known as Fusion following a £1million revamp in 1997.

Special gel to send birds flying



Adam Rozga at Dagar Tools with the gel that stops birds from fouling properties

A special gel which could help deter pigeons and other birds from roosting on buildings in Midland town centres has gone on the market.

Stourbridge-based company Dagar Tools has secured a contract to bring the Koren-developed gel known as Birds Away to the region.

The gel is made of food-based oils including peppermint and cinnamon to produce the substance.

When spread across wall ledges, buildings and monuments it creates an ultra-violet light.

Fire

Birds can see ultra-violet light and when they go to land on the surface the gels appears to them as red-hot fire.

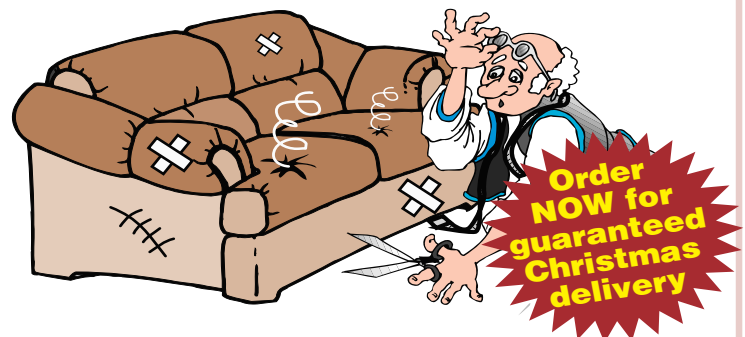
The makers claim the birds will be scared away instead of landing on monuments and laying droppings.

Dagar Tools which has been based in Lye for around 30 years, already has a contract with Bridgnorth Town Council.

Firm director Adam Rozga, said they had also been consulting on how the gel could be used to protect Bewdley Bridge.

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thechronicle

Baby boom boost for zoo visitor numbers

Visitor numbers have soared by more than 10 per cent at Dudley Zoo, with bosses crediting a summer "baby boom" for the thousands more people flooding through the gates.

A total of 14,714 more people headed dropped in to the popular tourist attraction in Castle Hill between January and September – a rise of 10.7 per cent on last year – bringing visitor numbers up to almost 150,000.

And Zoo spokeswoman Jill Hitchman said new arrivals such as the rare

birth of baby orangutan Sprout, who made her debut in May, had helped draw in the crowds.

"These are cracking figures, especially given the state of the economy," she said.

Babies

"We have had lots of new animals join us this year, and there has been a real 'baby boom' which I think has probably attracted a lot of people."

"Everyone loves to see the babies. The zoo has yet to calculate the figures for October, which are likely to

be boosted by the Indian summer that saw temperatures soar into the 80s.

Other new additions to the zoo this year have included red panda Amba, born in June, and Lar gibbon Luna who was the first of the endangered species to be born at the Midland attraction, and took her first steps last month.

And baby capybara Pecan surprised visitors when she entered the enclosure with her mother just hours after being born at the very start of the summer.

Demolition starts at historic former pub

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

A former pub in Coseley is being razed to the ground after standing at the site since the 19th century.

Local historians have said they were sad to see the loss of the former Earl of Wessex pub.

Demolition work has now started at the site after planning permission was granted last year for a housing development despite a campaign to save the well-known building.

Originally called Albert House, it was home to the Greenway family until the 1940s.

The family owned a number of file-cutting workshops nearby and donated the land for Bradley's Greenway Playing Fields.

George Blackham from Sedgley Local History Society said that the building had been used as a pub since the 1940s.

He said it was initially named The New Spread Eagle followed by Malone's, and then The Sherlock Holmes before finally becoming The Earl of Wessex. The last pint was pulled in around 2008. "The property was a splendid example of a Black Country big house dating from the Victorian era," he added.



The former Earl of Wessex pub in Coseley is being demolished

Planning permission was secured last summer for eight houses to be built on the site after Dudley Council's planning committee was told the building was not listed nor was it in a conservation area.

Coseley Civic Trust launched a bid to oppose the proposals, arguing the pub is one of the Black Country's "great houses".

Coseley Civic Trust chairman John Wilkes said he was sorry to see the building go but felt it was inevitable unless someone had stepped forward with the cash for it to be maintained as a residential property of some sort.

He added that he was under the impression that when the site was operating as a pub, it had proved a successful building.

Builders have been spotted taking down the old pub brick by brick and a site advertising the land as a residential development up for sale has gone up at the front of the building.

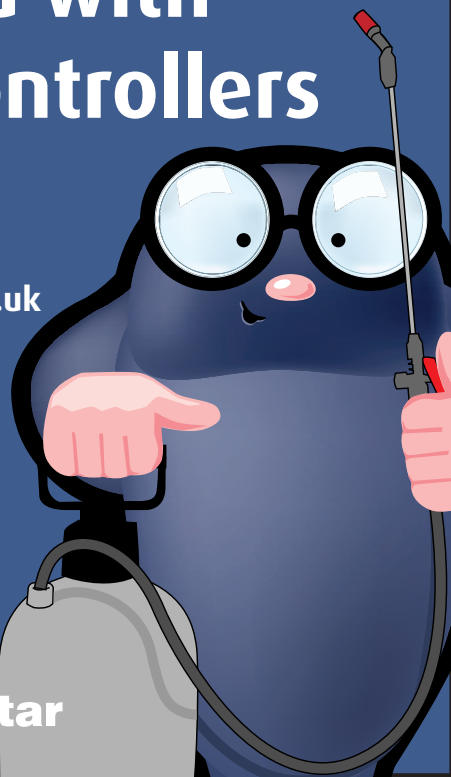


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Car wash hit by £15k damage

Buildings and machinery has been destroyed in a suspected arson attack at a Lye car wash.

The owners of the Jet King Car Wash in Hayes Lane revealed up to £15,000 worth of damage had been caused after the storage building caught fire during the early hours of October 10.

Alberto Kola, who has run the business for around five years, said an emergency order of new equipment had been made and he hoped to get the business back up and running within two days.

He said he had been alerted by neighbours who called him when they spotted the fire. "The damage is really

bad - I arrived and just saw big flames everywhere," he said.

"Everything has been destroyed - the machinery, the office, everything. Customers have been coming in all morning, and they are all shocked by what they see. But we want to make it clear to everyone that we will be open again soon."

Pictures taken show how the small outbuilding was gutted by the blaze.

Watch commander Carl Smith, from Stourbridge Fire Station, said the unit was being used as an office and for storage by the car wash business. "It has been completely destroyed. The fire was started deliberately and the

police are now investigating," he said. The crew was called at around 12.30am. The West Midlands Police helicopter was also called to the scene, after passers-by reported a possible burglary at the site.

Officers managed to broadcast live video footage to the control room to show the extent of the blaze.

The small red building, which stands in the corner of the lot, contained equipment used at the car wash such as jets and tanks to be filled with water. Cleaning chemicals and paperwork related to the business were also kept in the storage unit, and completely destroyed.

Schools to adopt new speed limit

New 20mph speed limits could be introduced outside schools in Dudley under new plans discussed by council leaders.

Limits would be slashed at peak times for traffic each morning and afternoon.

The scheme is already being trialled outside three schools - Olive Hill and Newfield Park primaries in Halesowen and at Kingswinford's Crestwood School.

Councillor Adrian Turner tabled the motion asking the council to implement 20mph speed limit zones outside all schools in the borough.

He claimed the move would demonstrate "our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of the children" in the area.

Cabinet member for transport Councillor Patrick Harley backed the proposal and called for a report to be drawn up.

He said: "Clearly this would not be appropriate to introduce outside all schools."

Bright sparks look at power

Youngsters got a closer look at a electric car powered by wind turbines and solar panels at Dudley Environment Zone.

Pupils from Roberts Primary School were invited to see the Nissan Leaf car which staff had borrowed for the day.

It was charged up using electricity generated by the wind turbines at the site in Robert Street, Lower Gornal. Energy was also created by the centre's solar panels to help run the car.

Environmental education officer Guy de Szathmari, who has worked at the site for 12 years, said: "We used the electric car to show pupils that it is possible the car of the future and doesn't require petrol or diesel and just needs charging up."

"It generated a lot of interest and excitement from the pupils."

"We wanted to make them aware of renewable energies."

The centre provides education and information on a range of environmental topics to school children and groups across the borough.

When the centre first opened it catered for around 1,000 people each year but now welcomes 10,000 annually.



Front, Alex Cartwright, and Leah Mills, with Amelia Broadhouse, electrical vehicle manager Chris Pollard, environmental education officer Guy de Szathmari, Ben Dumphy, Lucy Lloyd and Jack Birch

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- Walkers Strawberry & Cream Biscuits, 150g
- Twinings English Breakfast Tea (20s)

- ☐ **USA Luxury - £53.75**
- ☐ **Canadian Luxury - £53.75**
- Weston's Traditional Fruit Cake, 600g
- Royal Edinburgh Shortbread Fingers, 125g
- Jacobsen's Bakery Tin of Biscuits, 150g
- Robertson's Scotch & Orange Marmalade, 250ml
- Waterbridge Peanut Brittle Wedge Box, 178g
- Baxters Chicken & Vegetable Soup, 540ml
- Borges Green Olives with Pimento, 125ml
- Carr's Sesame Water Crackers, 125g
- Leaf Licorice Allsorts Bag, 140g
- Tate & Lyle Golden Syrup, 250ml
- Rademaker Chocolate Mint sticks, 75g

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thechronicle

£8m bid for revamp at the new academy

dudleychrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Multi-million pound plans have been unveiled to rebuild parts of a newly-created academy in Dudley and set up a new sixth form.

Holly Hall Academy has applied for £8 million of funding from the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme, with principal Graham Lloyd saying parts of the school building are in a poor state of repair.

Mr Lloyd, who led the former maths and computing college in a successful bid to become an academy in the summer, is also hoping to introduce a sixth form. That would be in conjunction with the new Dudley Sixth project at Dudley College.

"We are preparing to launch a consultation on providing post-16 education on-site," he said.

"We want to provide students with the choice to be able to stay on. We are looking to link with Dudley Sixth so we are able to offer a fuller range of subjects that we might not have enough demand for by ourselves, such as Spanish."

The Priority Schools Building Programme is a scheme from the Department for Education to rebuild 200 schools across the country in the worst condition. "We're definitely not among the worst in the country, but there are parts - such as the sports facility - which are very poor indeed," Mr Lloyd added.

Priorities

"The programme is also willing to look at other priorities so we are hoping that our aims for a sixth form provision will help get the funding approved. We have applied for £8m of funding and if we get permission to introduce a sixth form that amount will probably go up. We should know either way by Christmas."

He said the transformation from a college into an academy, which opened last month, had gone "very smoothly". "We are the masters of our own destiny now," he said. "We have been doing some really interesting things with the students, so they have seen a difference as well. It's very exciting."

Mr Lloyd first applied for academy status at the start of the year after becoming frustrated with council budget cuts which restricted his own decisions on where to spend money.

"At Holly Hall, we managed to get pupil attendance to a very high level thanks to the hard work of our truancy officer, and we didn't want to undo all that," he said. "As an academy, we can assess the needs of our own school and our own pupils, instead of falling into line with other schools who may have very different priorities."

Spread wings on course



Teachers Bill Pinchers with Achilles the falcon and John Conlan with hawk, Princess

Anyone interested in falconry can sign up to a new course to learn all about the hobby in Sedgley.

The Brockswood Animal Sanctuary will be launching the sessions next month.

A call has gone out for interested parties to come forward and try their hand at the unusual hobby.

Called An Introduction To the Keeping of Birds of Prey and Falconry, it is being run by John Conlan, a local falconer. It starts on November 12 and will run for five weeks between 1pm and 4pm.

Those wanting to go along will be asked to pay a discounted rate of £200 to take part in the course. Anyone who wants to take part should call 01902 884 390.

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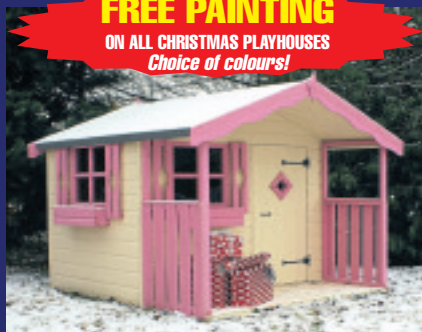
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REVIEWS

Tragic love tales

Madame Butterfly/ La Traviata,
The Grand, Wolverhampton

The coquettish and beautiful Elena Dee seemed born to play the part of Cio-Cio-San in this Ellen Kent production of Puccini's tragic love story.

With a soprano voice that filled the theatre with crystal clear tones and excellently expressive acting, Korean singer Dee portrayed the misguided and lovelorn Madama Butterfly wonderfully.

She was more than ably supported by Ruslan Zinevych as the love rat Lieutenant F B Pinkerton, Viktoriya Zhytkova as her faithful servant Suzuki and the slimy marriage broker Goro played with gusto by Sergiy Ledenov.

Butterfly, set in Nagasaki, Japan in the early 1900s, is the story of a geisha, a trusting soul who gives herself completely to American Pinkerton and remains the faithful wife when all around her, barring Suzuki, have disowned her. Bringing up the absent naval officer's son, Butterfly looks longingly over the sea every day for years hoping to see her love return.

However, when he does he brings with him tragedy, heart-break and ultimately the demise of Cio-Cio-San. The heart-rending tale is told wonderfully through Puccini's score as it weaves around and between the characters' voices expressing the highs and lows of being desperately in love.

With Verdi's La Traviata the following night this is the first run for the Ellen Kent Production at The Grand but with the quality they display it's unlikely to be the last.

La Traviata

Courtesan Violetta was passionately played by the wonderfully talented Rosa Lee Thomas whose astounding vocal range perfectly expressed the unselfish love her tragic character had for Alfredo Germont, played admirably by Andriy Perfilov, in Verdi's tale of tragedy.

Violetta meets Alfredo during a lavish Paris party in the mid-1800s where he declares his love for her and begs her to leave aside her hedonistic lifestyle which he feels is not helping her failing health. After much soul-searching she agrees and finds happiness living with Alfredo and finances their life by gradually selling off her possessions.

Alfredo's father Giorgio, played wonderfully by Ievgenii Lysytskiy, persuades Violetta to give up his son due to the relationship affecting the marital opportunities of his beloved daughter and his duets with the Anglo-American soprano is one of the high points. So, Violetta forces her true love to leave by returning to a previous escort and is left alone with her health rapidly going downhill. Alfredo learns the truth of her unselfish love and returns to find Violetta weak but she lives long enough to tell him of her undying love.

DANNY FARRAGHER

End of the Rainbow, B-ham Hippodrome

JUDY Garland is resurrected by an astonishing performance from Tracie Bennett in Peter Quilter's witty and poignant drama with songs about the decline and fall of the showbiz legend.

This is no tribute to the Hollywood icon in the Stars In Your Eyes mode, although former Coronation Street actress Miss Bennett did win a celebrity version of that show as Garland some years ago. Instead, it is an uncensored depiction of the pill-popping, tantrum-throwing, Garland at the end of her career and, indeed, her life. She was dead at 47 from an overdose of sleeping pills.

Set in a hotel room and the Talk of the Town nightclub, during her punishing schedule of London concerts in 1968 just a few months before her death, Tracie Bennett is spell-binding as the little woman with a big voice. Her performance crackles with energy, showing the way Garland could transform herself on stage despite crippling bouts of self-doubt and stage fright.

There is solid support from Hilton McRae as her pianist and confidante Anthony and Norman Bowman as future husband number five Mickey.

But the play belongs to Tracie Bennett and her intensely physical performance, thrown around by her fiancé, crawling, crying, performing as if totally wired on uppers. The final Somewhere Over The Rainbow is a heart-breaker and won a standing ovation. It runs until Saturday.

One Man, Two Guvnors, New Alexandra

Panto season has come early to the Alex, where Gavin and Stacey's James Corden revamps an 18th century play in a rollicking night of belly laughs with lots of audience participation and banter.

Set in the criminal underworld of 1960s Brighton by playwright Richard Bean, rather than the 1740s Venice of Carlo Goldoni's Servant Of Two Masters, a fine ensemble from the National Theatre blend farce, slapstick, music hall smut and a dollop of Monty Pythonism.

Daniel Rigby - recently seen on screen as Eric Morecambe - is superb as a pompous actor, Oliver Chris is barking as an upper-class twit and Tom Edden almost steals the show as a decrepit ancient waiter. There's even a rock 'n' roll band on stage. But Nicholas Hytner's production hinges on Corden as the fearless hungry rogue who spectacularly fails to cope with his two jobs. It runs until Saturday.

LEON BURAKOWSKI

Jessie J, O2 Academy

She said 'Nobody's Perfect'. And so it proved as Jessica Cornish made a false start on the first date of her Heartbeat tour. The 23-year-old songstress ordered the gig to start again as her backpack wasn't switched on. There's was nothing false about the rest of the night, however.

Jessie said she was using the night to perfect the start for the rest of the tour, and apologised in advance for anything that may have gone wrong. Little did as from the opening track Big White Room she showed off her powerful voice. Chris Brown's I Need This, Casualty of Love and a cover of Luther Vandross's Never Too Much showed her soulful side, along with the reggae-infused Stand Up.

Jessie, with purple bob, was dressed in black crop top, shorts and strappy high heels that accentuated her legs as she enjoyed a terrific rapport with the packed crowd. They were given a preview of the yet-to-be released Shadow before an encore that featured debut single Do It Like a Dude and the chart-topping Price Tag, complete with backing vocals from 10-year-old fan Molly. Dummy Love ended the set.

MARK SHIPP

Stephen Merchant, B-ham Symphony Hall

For more than 10 years Stephen Merchant has lived in the shadow of his comedy partner Ricky Gervais.

During this time the pair have made hugely successful television programmes The Office and Extras and the gangly 6ft 7in Merchant hasn't been anywhere near the stage, leaving his stand-up career on the back burner.

It would have been easy for him to live off his success but Merchant's bold attempt to branch out on his own with new tour Hello Ladies will pay off handsomely. Refreshingly, Gervais only gets one mention in the show with Merchant focusing not on his fame, but his inability to woo the ladies.

Of course the duo share the same sense of humour so there are tinges of Gervais here, but Merchant gives his routine a far more humble and genuinely endearing touch. Stephen Merchant is at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Saturday, November 5.

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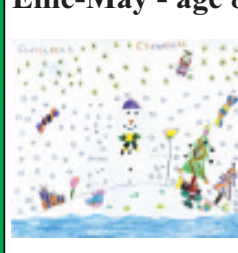
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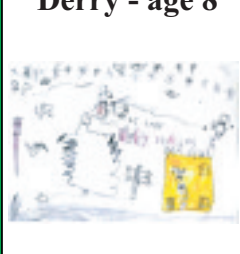
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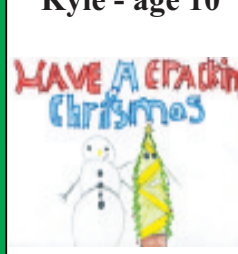
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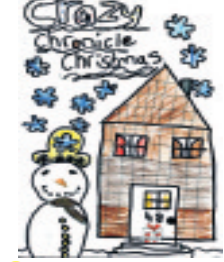
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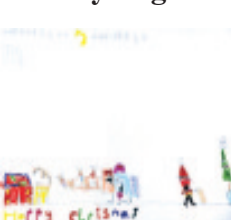
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Show a real gift for festive ideas

YES it's the countdown to Christmas - the shops are already filling up with cards and gift ideas.

So time to book your place for the Festive Gift Fair which returns to Birmingham's NEC for the 16th year. And we have teamed up with the organisers to offer 18 readers the chance to win a pair of tickets for the show.

The four-day show, which will run between November 17-20, offers visitors a massive array of inspirational and affordable Christmas gift ideas.

Gadgets

This year there will be gifts for even the most difficult-to-buy for relatives; with stalls as varied as chocolate pizzas from Nottingham, liqueurs and spirits from Anglesey, handbags and accessories from nearby Warwickshire and dog toys from Malvern.

There's kiddies' cookware from Kingsbridge and gents' gadgets from Telford, decorations from Stroud and cheese from Cornwall. With so much to choose from there's even a 'present crèche' for you to drop off your bags. TV chef Ainsley Harriott will be his



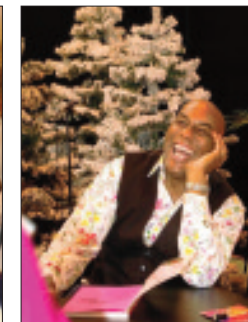
Brighten up your home with the many festive decorations on offer

usual mischievous self and will be at the show to sign autographs on Thursday (17) from noon-3pm.

Ticket prices start at just £8.50 for adults and are available from www.theticketfactory.com or 0844 581 0808. For more information visit www.festivegiftfair.co.uk or www.thenec.co.uk.



Plenty for the shoppers to check out with the many exhibitors



Ainsley will be there on Thursday to sign autographs



HOW TO ENTER

To stand a chance of winning answer the following question:

When will TV chef Ainsley be at the show?

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and contact number (only one entry per household) to Festive Show competition, Chronicle series (editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: Thursday, October 27.

Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

star★extra TRAVEL

WEST END BREAKS

Choose your show, price band* and how you want to travel

Coach inclusive breaks

Selected weekend departures **FROM £124.95 (Saturday Night)**
FROM £129.95 (Dine and Dance)

Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Dine and Dance option see the matinee performance before heading back to the hotel for dinner and disco (conditions apply). For the Saturday Night option you will see the evening performance. For both breaks the price includes a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel, with full English breakfast (plus dinner for Dine and Dance options). Pick ups are from Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Rail inclusive breaks

Departures most weekends **FROM £129.95**

Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital. There's a choice of London hotels and your ticket is for a Saturday evening performance. Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Depart Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Sandwell and Dudley, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing. Stay the Friday evening too for an additional cost.

Self-drive breaks

Departures most weekends **FROM £89.95 (Friday Night)**
FROM £99.95 (Saturday Night)

The self-drive break is for one evening staying either on the Friday night or Saturday night in a four-star hotel. You will see the evening performance: for Friday night you will have a top price ticket and for Saturday evening there is a choice of price bands. Stay extra nights for a reasonable supplement (subject to availability).

* The "from" price and price bands vary for each show - see brochure for details. Single room supplements apply.

For a brochure please call (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm), email starextra@expressandstar.co.uk (please include your name and address) or go to www.expressandstar.com/starextratravel

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

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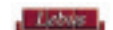
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Precious moments of pure animal magic

THEY are the kind of photographs most people could never dream of taking.

A mouse caught in the act stealing bird food, baby blackbirds calling out for their mother and hedgehogs and a puppy eating alongside each other – all captured by professional snapper Graham Gough in his garden.

But Graham, from Kinver, said the wildlife in his pictures could be found in everyone's gardens and all it required to snap them was a little perseverance.

The former Express & Star photographer, who started his career aged just 15, had his extensive collection of work featured in a Himley Hall exhibition last year, and now aged 72 is still snapping away for the fun of it.

"They say photographers never die; they just go out of focus," Graham said.

His wildlife shots were taken over

the space of a few years and each has a story behind it.

Like the baby magpies who saw two of their siblings either captured and eaten before Graham rebuilt their nest and fed them for 24 hours.

Graham, who is married to Mary and has two daughters and four grandchildren, said everyone could find nature like this if they looked hard enough.

"It's just a case of keeping your eyes open," Graham added. "They're creatures of habit and you notice they do certain things at certain times."

"There is obviously lots of patience involved though – I photographed that robin 30 or 40 times before getting the right shot."

Some of Graham's work, in particular shots of the Dudley riots from 1962, is currently on display at Dudley Archives and in schools across the borough.



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Joe sees no more barriers to his solo singing career

October 27.



Joe Jonas of top American pop group The Jonas Brothers is appearing as Britney Spears' special guest at the LG Arena after releasing his urban R&B-style solo debut album

"I got to meet the One Direction guys and thought they were really

Asked who he would like to collaborate with, Joe said: "I like Kanye West and would really like to do something with him, that would be really interesting. British artists like Adele, Tinie Tempah, Foster The People, something a little different from what I'm

And would he bring his brothers to tour Europe? "I would love to get that tour together, we have got so many good friends over here."

REEL

(Quinton)

Reel Cinema

Quinton Now Offer

Films in 3D

FRIDAY 1ST OCTOBER TO
THURSDAY 17TH OCTOBER

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>JOHNNY ENGLISH - (PG)</p> <p>Friday, Saturday and Sunday 1320 1550 1820 2050</p> <p>Monte Carlo to Thursday 1550 1820 2050</p> <p>TINTIN - (PG) - FLS - 3D</p> <p>Monte Carlo to Thursday 1300 1555 1810 2045</p> <p>LION KING - (U) - FLS - 3D</p> <p>Friday and Saturday 1300 1550</p> <p>Friday and Wednesday to Sunday & Thursday 1300 1300 1500</p> <p>REAL STEEL - (12A) - FLS</p> <p>All Week 1700 2000</p> <p>MONTE CARLO - (PG) - FLS</p> <p>Friday, Saturday and Sunday 1310 1810</p> <p>Monte Carlo Thursday 1110 1320</p> | <p>THE THREE MUSKETEERS - (12A) - 3D - FLS</p> <p>Friday, Saturday and Sunday - 1320 1550 1820</p> <p>Monte Carlo to Thursday - 2040</p> <p>DOLPHIN TALE - (U) - FLS</p> <p>Friday, Monday to Thursday 1315 1540</p> <p>FOOTLOOSE - (12A) - FLS</p> <p>Friday, Saturday and Sunday 1800 2040</p> <p>Monte Carlo to Thursday 1800</p> <p>KIDS CLUB</p> <p>MR. POPEYE PENGUINS - (PG)</p> <p>Saturday to Thursday 1100</p> <p>SMURFS - (U)</p> <p>Saturday and Sunday 1100</p> <p>Monte Carlo 1100</p> |
|---|--|

FLS - FREE LIST SUSPENDED (NO COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS)
 PROGRAMME SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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- Weoley Castle

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3PM - 6.30PM

SCREAM
Challenge

Lantern
Making

Laser
Tag

Haunted
Roller Disco

Horror
Face Painting

INFLATABLE FUNZONE

GHOST

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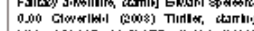
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IN CINEMAS NOW

9.00 Breakfast. 11.00 Match of the Day. (F) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 9.00 Sunday Morning Live. 11.00 Country Music. Weather for the Week Ahead. 12.00 The Politics Show. 1.00 Reinhardt: You Only Live Twice. 1.30 EndEnder. 2.30 The X Factor. The X Factor. 3.00 Planet Dinocore. (F) 3.30 Points of View. 4.30 Songs of Praise.

9.00 BBC News Regional. 9.00 BBC News. 9.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison visit the Success village of Shildon. 10.30 Saturday. 11.00 Come Dine With Me. The reality show, and Vincent and Florida perform an Argentine tango.

12.00 The X Factor. The reality show, and Vincent and Florida perform an Argentine tango.

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DEN CANEY COACHES

October-December Day Trips

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| Sat 29th Oct | Drayton Manor Fireworks Spectacular (Return 9.30 pm)..... | £25.00 |
| Sat 29th Oct | Matlock Bath Illuminations..... | £14.50 |
| Sat 5th Nov | Alton Towers Fireworks (Return 9.30 pm)..... | £35.00 |
| Sat 12th Nov | Bicester Shopping Village..... | £9.00 |
| Mon 14th Nov | Weston Super Mare Carnival (Return 10.00 pm) .. | £11.00 |
| | Not to be missed | |
| Sat 19th Nov | Cheltenham Christmas Market (Return 6.00 pm) ... | £9.00 |
| Sat 26th Nov | A Very Victorian Gloucester | £10.00 |
| Sat 3rd Dec | Worcester Christmas Market | £9.50 |
| Sat 10th Dec | Drayton Manor Magical Christmas | £21.00 |
| | Thomas Land Open (Main Rides closed) | |
| Thur 29th Dec | Warwick Castle | £20.00 |

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Friday

BBC1 9.00 Breakfast 9.15 Helicopter
Heroics **9.30** Home Under the
Hammer **9.50** BBC News **Weather** 10.00 **10.10** **10.15** **10.20** **10.25** **10.30** **10.35** **10.40** **10.45** **10.50** **10.55** **11.00** **11.05** **11.10** **11.15** **11.20** **11.25** **11.30** **11.35** **11.40** **11.45** **11.50** **11.55** **12.00** **12.05** **12.10** **12.15** **12.20** **12.25** **12.30** **12.35** **12.40** **12.45** **12.50** **12.55** **13.00** **13.05** **13.10** **13.15** **13.20** **13.25** **13.30** **13.35** **13.40** **13.45** **13.50** **13.55** **14.00** **14.05** **14.10** **14.15** **14.20** **14.25** **14.30** **14.35** **14.40** **14.45** **14.50** **14.55** **15.00** **15.05** **15.10** **15.15** **15.20** **15.25** **15.30** **15.35** **15.40** **15.45** **15.50** **15.55** **16.00** **16.05** **16.10** **16.15** **16.20** **16.25** **16.30** **16.35** **16.40** **16.45** **16.50** **16.55** **17.00** **17.05** **17.10** **17.15** **17.20** **17.25** **17.30** **17.35** **17.40** **17.45** **17.50** **17.55** **18.00** **18.05** **18.10** **18.15** **18.20** **18.25** **18.30** **18.35** **18.40** **18.45** **18.50** **18.55** **19.00** **19.05** **19.10** **19.15** **19.20** **19.25** **19.30** **19.35** **19.40** **19.45** **19.50** **19.55** **20.00** **20.05** **20.10** **20.15** **20.20** **20.25** **20.30** **20.35** **20.40** **20.45** **20.50** **20.55** **21.00** **21.05** **21.10** **21.15** **21.20** **21.25** **21.30** **21.35** **21.40** **21.45** **21.50** **21.55** **22.00** **22.05** **22.10** **22.15** **22.20** **22.25** **22.30** **22.35** **22.40** **22.45** **22.50** **22.55** **23.00** **23.05** **23.10** **23.15** **23.20** **23.25** **23.30** **23.35** **23.40** **23.45** **23.50** **23.55** **24.00** **24.05** **24.10** **24.15** **24.20** **24.25** **24.30** **24.35** **24.40** **24.45** **24.50** **24.55** **25.00** **25.05** **25.10** **25.15** **25.20** **25.25** **25.30** **25.35** **25.40** **25.45** **25.50** **25.55** **26.00** **26.05** **26.10** **26.15** **26.20** **26.25** **26.30** **26.35** **26.40** **26.45** **26.50** **26.55** **27.00** **27.05** **27.10** **27.15** **27.20** **27.25** **27.30** **27.35** **27.40** **27.45** **27.50** **27.55** **28.00** **28.05** **28.10** **28.15** **28.20** **28.25** **28.30** **28.35** **28.40** **28.45** **28.50** **28.55** **29.00** **29.05** **29.10** **29.15** **29.20** **29.25** **29.30** **29.35** **29.40** **29.45** **29.50** **29.55** **30.00** **30.05** **30.10** **30.15** **30.20** **30.25** **30.30** **30.35** **30.40** **30.45** **30.50** **30.55** **31.00** **31.05** **31.10** **31.15** **31.20** **31.25** **31.30** **31.35** **31.40** **31.45** **31.50** **31.55** **32.00** **32.05** **32.10** **32.15** **32.20** **32.25** **32.30** **32.35** **32.40** **32.45** **32.50** **32.55** **33.00** **33.05** **33.10** **33.15** **33.20** **33.25** **33.30** **33.35** **33.40** **33.45** **33.50** **33.55** **34.00** **34.05** **34.10** **34.15** **34.20** **34.25** **34.30** **34.35** **34.40** **34.45** **34.50** **34.55** **35.00** **35.05** **35.10** **35.15** **35.20** **35.25** **35.30** **35.35** **35.40** **35.45** **35.50** **35.55** **36.00** **36.05** **36.10** **36.15** **36.20** **36.25** **36.30** **36.35** **36.40** **36.45** **36.50** **36.55** **37.00** **37.05** **37.10** **37.15** **37.20** **37.25** **37.30** **37.35** **37.40** **37.45** **37.50** **37.55** **38.00** **38.05** **38.10** **38.15** **38.20** **38.25** **38.30** **38.35** **38.40** **38.45** **38.50** **38.55** **39.00** **39.05** **39.10** **39.15** **39.20** **39.25** **39.30** **39.35** **39.40** **39.45** **39.50** **39.55** **40.00** **40.05** **40.10** **40.15** **40.20** **40.25** **40.30** **40.35**

BEC2 6:00 *Goodbye, Zoo* CBS, 6:30
CBS, 11:00 *Pin* Fox, 11:00
Show, 12:00 *Daily Politics* 12:30 *GAT* with
George Magid, 1:00 *Diagnostic Center*, 1:15
Royal Uptown Downside (P) 2, 15 *Weekend Link*
(P) 2:00 *Armed Down Under* (P) 2, 5 *Escape*
the Country (P) 2:30 *Flog It* (P) 5, 15 *Put Your
Money Where Your Mouth Is* (P) 5:00 *Eggheads*
(P) 5:30 *Strinky Come Dancin'* - It Takes Two, 200
The Fare Show, 2:00 *Garfield*, 2:30
10:00 *Clash* 2:30 *Armstrong* 10:00
10:00 *Cl* 10:30 *Headright* 11:00 *The Reader*
Show, 11:15 *Weather*, 11:30 *Later with Jools*
Holakis, 12:35 *Link* La Zorra (2007) 2:25 *The*

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Channel 4 6-9 The Hokey Hokey (R) 7:30
 10-11 The Franchise (R) 7:30
 12-13 Everybody Loves Raymond (R) 8:35 Frasier (R)
 8:55 Undercover Boss USA (R) 9:55 How to Look
 Good Naked (R) 10:55 Phil Spencer (R) 11:00
 11-12 The Bill Engvall Show (R) 11:00
 13-14 House Practice (R) 11:05 Channel 4 Presents: Love
 and Patsy (R) The Color Girl (R) 1:10 River Cottage
 Etc. (R) 1:20 Film Two Thousand Women (R) 1:40
 15-16 The Bill Engvall Show (R) 1:40
 17-18 In a Bed 5:30 Come Dine with Me (R) 6:00
 The Simpsons (R) 6:30 Hollywood (R) 6:55 100
 2000 Channel 4 Movie 7:30 Unreported World (R) 7:50
 8-9 The Bill Engvall Show (R) 8:00
 10-11 Strong 8:00 Come Dine with Me (R) 8:00 Derrin
 Brown The Condemned (R) 8:30 Pete Verbeke Live
 9:45 8 Out of 10 Cats 11:15 Channel 4 Movie
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2.00 *Crime* 2.15 *Crime* 2.30 *Crime* 2.45
3.00 *Police Checking Rats* (2007) 5.00 *S. Mewc* (R)
5.25 *Headhouse* (R) 6.00 *Home and Away* (R)
6.25 *CHI TV* 7.00 *S. Mewc* (R) 7.20 *Big Brother*
S. Mewc Update 8.00 *Ice Road Truckers: Deadliest*
Roads (R) 8.30 *S. Mewc* (R) 9.00 *Big Brother: Live*
Evidence 10.00 *The Bachelor* 11.00 *Big Brother*
The Evidence Interviews 11.30 *Big Brother* (R) 11.55
The Split (R) 12.45 *Headhouse* (R) 1.05 *Motorcycle*
Murder (R) 1.25 *Big Brother* (R) 1.55 *Country* (R)
2.00 *S. Mewc* *Home Doctor* (R)

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Chairman visits development



Barratt Group chairman Bob Lawson and Adrian Farr Field, managing director for Barratt West Midlands, on a boat in Waters Edge canal basin, Stourport on Severn

THE Chairman of the country's best known housebuilder, the Barratt Group recently visited Waters Edge in Stourport on Severn – a major waterside regeneration project by the company's West Midlands division.

Bob Lawson, is in fact the second VIP to visit the scheme on Mart Lane recently, after Wyre Forrest MP Mark Garnier once gave it his seal of approval last month.

A total of 146 homes are currently under construction at Waters Edge and the project is helping to breathe new life into the town's canal basin.

Moorings

The development also has 18 boat moorings which are available to purchasers of the new homes.

During his visit Mr Lawson was shown around the canal basins that have recently been restored, some of the brand new properties that have been constructed and he had the



Barratt Group chairman Bob Lawson is discussing the Waters Edge development with sales adviser Heather Hanks and Barratt's sales director Graydon Worthing

chance to speak to some residents at Waters Edge. Mr Lawson, said, "Waters Edge represents the full panoply of Barratt's expertise. Outstanding historic buildings have been completely renovated and given a new life and new uses. Sympathetic new construction has been undertaken to create new homes for individuals and families in an outstanding environment which blends the rich history with modern living requirements."

"I was very proud to see the result and I am confident that Waters Edge will give the residents and the people of Stourport much pleasure in the years ahead."

Graydon Worthing, Sales Director for Barratt West Midlands added, "It was a pleasure to have Mr Lawson visit Waters Edge."

This development is a flagship scheme for us, having been designed around the beautiful and historic basin.

Invest

"We have had a lot of interest from the local community and also from people outside the area keen to invest or make a new home in the popular town of Stourport. First time buyers

and people looking to downsize are particularly interested in this development."

Barratt West Midlands is currently offering a selection of two- bedroom apartments at Waters Edge priced from £159,950 and three-bedroom houses priced from £170,000. For more information, please contact the sales office on 01299 828 130 open daily from 10am to 5pm.

Alternatively, please call the sales hotline on 0844 811 9933 open seven days a week from 8am to 9pm or log on to www.barratthomes.co.uk/waters-edge



Bob Lawson and Graydon Worthing view the development from a bridge

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|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| OLDBURY Bodenham Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Semi-detached house * Tastefully presented * Ideally suited to first time buyer * Three bedrooms * Gas boiler serving radiators * Double glazing to windows <p>Offers in the region of £112,500</p> | BIRMINGHAM Quinton Bissell Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Semi detached house * Two bedrooms * Conservatory * Lounge * Kitchen * Good size garden * Double glazing to windows <p>Offers in excess of £105,000</p> | STOURBRIDGE Lye Pedmore Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Link detached house * Two bedrooms * Requires refurbishment * Lounge * Kitchen * First floor bathroom * Extensive garden * CASH OFFERS ONLY <p>Offers in the region of £69,950</p> | HALESOWEN 35 Newlands Drive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Link detached house * 3 double bedrooms * 2 reception rooms * Kitchen/ breakfast area * Converted loft space * Large garage with utility * GCH & mostly D/G <p>Monthly rent of £750</p> | OLDBURY 11 Elisma Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Attractive extended family house * Three double bedrooms * Decorated & improved * 2 reception rooms * Kitchen & host of appliances * Garage, shed & beautiful garden * Gas central heating <p>Monthly rent of £650</p> | HALESOWEN 102 Olive Lane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Modern semi detached house * 2 bedrooms * fitted kitchen with oven, hob, hood * bathroom with white suite * gas boiler/radiator heating system * carpets/floor coverings <p>Monthly rent of £530</p> | BIRMINGHAM Quinton Ridgacre Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Traditional style semi detached * three bedrooms * open plan kitchen/breakfast room * bathroom with both bath & shower cubicle * gas boiler serving radiators <p>Offers in the region of £144,950</p> |
| STOURBRIDGE Clent Apartment 9 Clent Cottage Odnall Lane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Furnished apartment * double bedroom * kitchen with appliances * bathroom with shower * gch & dgw * beautiful quite location & grounds * ideal for access to the motorway! <p>Monthly rent of £495</p> | HALESOWEN 123 Apperley Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * First floor flat * One bedroom * Quality finish * Fitted kitchen * Bathroom with shower * Electric heating & DG windows * Available now! <p>Monthly rent of £375</p> | CRADLEY HEATH HADEN HILL AREA Flat 4 The Old Vicarage 439 Halesowen Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Self contained flat * one bedroom * upvc double glazed windows * shower over bath * electric heating * parking <p>Monthly rent of £375</p> | OLDBURY Flat 3 Quayside Close <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Self contained ground floor flat * One bedroom * Double glazed windows * Open plan living room kitchen * Electric heating * Car space * Available from 1st October <p>Monthly rent of £360</p> | ROWLEY REGIS Blackheath 27, 27a, 28 & 28a High Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail/residential property investment in a High Street location comprising two lock up shops and a one bedroom and a bedsit flat. <p>Offers in the region of £200,000</p> | CRADLEY HEATH Unit 4 Peacocks Industrial Estate Providence Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Workshop/warehouse * Established industrial estate * Well-presented with painted floor * Two toilets and small kitchen * Good natural lighting * GIA: 132.06 sq.m. (1,421 sq.ft.) <p>Annual rent Of £11,175</p> | DUDLEY Turners Street 13/14 Paganel Industrial Estate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Two linked starter units/warehouses * Small private estate * Two washrooms * Roller shutter door * Secure gated system to site * GIA: 101.87sq m (1096 sq ft) <p>Rent: £6,700 pa plus VAT</p> |
| | | | | | | 10 Paganel Industrial Estate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A starter unit/warehouse * Small private estate * Washroom * Roller shutter doors * Secure gated system to site * GIA: 49.43 sq.m. (531.90 sq.ft.) <p>Rent: £3,600 pa plus VAT</p> |

Estate House, 821 Hagley Road West, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1AD

Tapping the potential

Bathrooms are being turned into hi-tech spas and entertainment zones, according to Cheryl Gurner, international creative director at Bathrooms International.

"Eventually sensors will detect who is in the bathroom and a tailored automatic programme of water, temperature and lighting will activate.

"Televisions in bathrooms are becoming more common.

"Next, digital technology will allow images to be projected on to the ceiling or walls so that you're surrounded by a relaxing setting of your choice or can simply lie back and watch movies."

HI-TECH KIT. Enjoy surround-sound in a Nahho bath. Aheadrest aids buoyancy, while a sound module connects to an MP3 player.

There is also integral lighting and hidden taps. It starts from around £4,281, from West One Bathrooms.

● An Aquavision Waterproof Bathroom Television, from £1,186, from West One Bathrooms.

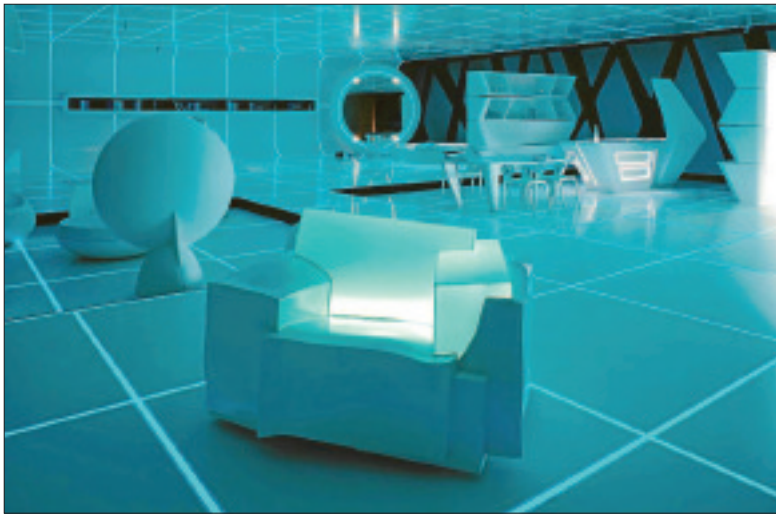
● Bathomatic fills a bath to a predetermined depth and temperature, and can add selected fragrances.

It can be fitted as an inset panel or wall-mounted and programmed remotely via a PC or smartphone. It starts from around £4,000.



Relax in front of an Aquavision Waterproof Bathroom television, from West One Bathrooms

Future homes are more sci-fi than DIY



Here's to the future – spectacular space-age home setting by DuPont Corian, inspired by 2010's science fiction film, Disney's Tron: Legacy, exhibited at the popular Milan Furniture Fair

Sharks in the swimming pool, a refrigerator which tells you what to eat and housework sorted at the touch of a button. It sounds out of this world, but will be coming soon to a home near you.

Technology has already transformed the way we work and communicate and now it's set to change the way we live, with innovative labour-saving kit becoming standard in luxury new homes.

Already the wealthy can enjoy touch-button control over all aspects of the home, from lighting, music, heating and appliances through to security.

The cost may currently put it beyond the reach of most of us, but the experts reckon that in years to come such hi-tech devices will become as familiar as power showers, electric garage doors and underfloor heating, which were virtually unheard of 25 years ago.

"Our appetite for technology grows all the time," says John Lees founder of Lees Associates, the company which created one of the newest and most unusual pieces of equipment, a shark-infested pool.

It superimposes images of the ocean predator seamlessly onto the floor and

sides of a pool or gym while sensors ensure the sharks skim within apparent 'biting' distance of a swimmer.

"The system is perfect for those who want to enliven boring keep-fit sessions, is great fun for children and looks beautiful," says Lees.

"We can incorporate the Jaws soundtrack for added atmosphere. Dolphins are an alternative for those of a more nervous disposition."

Despite the scary price tag of around £150,000, it's perfect for those who want to impress – and for many that's just as important as enjoying effortless living.

Gadgets

Research shows our desire for gadgets and appliances has become insatiable. Mintel predicts a rise in sales of home technology kit from £49 billion in 2008 to £60 billion by 2014.

"People are constantly surprised at how fast technology is moving and what can now be achieved," says Matt Wayne, consultant designer at Finite Solutions, which has offices in Leeds and London.

"Nowadays, it's perfectly possible to completely control your home environment remotely from wherever you are in the world by touching a button on your smartphone.

"People want homes which automatically cater for their every need. So

a client may want to return home to find the lights dimmed, a meal cooking, bath running and favourite music playing as soon as he steps inside his front door.

"All those functions can be a single 'mode' on his system which he activates by pressing a button on his smartphone while he's travelling back." Systems from Finite Solutions start at £30,000.

Many cutting-edge home appliances and up-to-the-minute technology have been on show this week (October 7-9) in The House of the Future at the Grand Designs Live Birmingham at the NEC.

Another glimpse into the not-so-distant future was recently provided by DuPont Corian whose spectacular space-age home, inspired by last year's science fiction film Tron: Legacy, was exhibited at the Milan Furniture Fair.

Bob Darke, managing director of electrical retailer Comet, predicts that energy-saving eco-technology will expand fastest, but that home entertainment developments will capture the most attention.

"In Japan there are already 'living walls' which transform into television screens, and where you can view your PC, store information and read books. Those will eventually arrive here," he says.

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HALESOWEN, FAIRFIELD ROAD

A unique opportunity to rent this stunning 4 bedrooms detached home in central Halesowen, comprising of: Four Bedrooms, Two Large Lounges, Beautiful Fitted Kitchen with Built in Appliances, Stunning Bathroom with Separate Shower Cubicle, En-Suite to Master Bedroom, Gas Central Heating, Part Double Glazing, Private Rear Garden, Off Road Parking

£1100 PCM



HALESOWEN, SUMMERFIELDS AVENUE

Located in Hurst Green, Halesowen is this beautiful extended semi-detached home and an ideal place for local schools and commutable for Birmingham, briefly comprising of: Four Bedrooms, Two Reception Rooms, Modern Fitted Dining Kitchen, House Bathroom with Shower, Downstairs WC, Gas Central Heating, Part Double Glazed, Front and Rear Gardens, Driveway and Garage Parking, Unfurnished

£775 PCM



HALESOWEN, CLANCEY WAY

This well presented and modern new build has come on the market, comprises of: Four Bedrooms, House Bathroom with Shower, Master with En-Suite, Large Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Small Rear Garden, Separate Garage. Viewing is Recommended, Unfurnished

£750 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, SIDAWAY CLOSE

A much improved and extended detached house, set in a cul-de-sac location, comprises of: Three Bedrooms, Refitted Dining Kitchen, Modern Lounge, Separate Dining Area, Master with En-Suite, Refitted Bathroom, Driveway Parking for 3/4 Cars, Rear Garden, Unfurnished

£750 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, ADMIRALS WAY

A very well presented unfurnished detached house, set within a quiet cul-de-sac, comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Separate Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, House Bathroom with Shower, Front & Rear Gardens, Garage & Driveway Parking.

£675 PCM



HALESOWEN, HUNTLANDS ROAD

Located on the Huntlands Estate, is this three storey terraced property, close to Halesowen town centre, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Double Glazing, Warm Air Heating, Family Bathroom, Front and Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking

£625 PCM



HALESOWEN, WROXLEY HOUSE

Luxury Living in Hayley Green. A superb, ground floor apartment, comprising of: Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen and Diner with French Doors to Balcony, Two Double Bedrooms, Master with En-Suite, Further Well Appointed Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing and Allocated Parking.

£625 PCM



HALESOWEN, MIDDLEFIELD AVENUE

Located in Hurst Green is this unfurnished semi detached house, comprising of: Gas Central Heating, 26ft Through Lounge/Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Garage and Driveway, Low Maintenance Gardens, Very Popular Area with Viewings Highly Recommended

£595 PCM



OLDURBY, LINKS CRESCENT

Set in a quiet location and having been newly decorated, is this lovely unfurnished mid-terrace home. Comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Very Large Lounge, Fitted Kitchen with Washing Machine, Shower Room, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front and Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking

£595 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, THRONE ROAD

Located on a commutable road into Birmingham and close to the M5 J2, is this well presented unfurnished semi-detached home, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Large Through Lounge, Modern Fitted Kitchen, House Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front and Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

£575 PCM



HALESOWEN, STOURDELL ROAD

A beautifully refurbished semi-detached home, in a sought after location and quiet road, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Large Through Lounge, Large Bathroom with Corner Bath and Shower, Small Kitchen, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Large Patio and Small Grassed Garden, Driveway Parking, Unfurnished

£575 PCM



HALESOWEN, CLEINT VIEW ROAD

A very spacious semi-detached home has come on the market in a very popular location, briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms, Large Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, House Bathroom, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front and Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking, Unfurnished Undergoing Decoration At The Moment

£550 PCM



STOURBRIDGE, TURNEY ROAD

Located in a quiet cul-de-sac is this unfurnished semi detached house, comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Large Living Room, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, One Single Bedroom, Modern Bathroom with Shower, Large Rear Garden, Ample Driveway Parking, Close to all local amenities

£525 PCM



HALESOWEN, MOUNT STREET

Located in central Halesowen and a beautiful property, is this end terraced property, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Two Reception Rooms, Open Plan Fitted Kitchen with White Goods, Lounge, House Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, On Road Parking, Unfurnished

£525 PCM



TIPTON, MIDDLE MEADOW

An unfurnished, modern third floor apartment briefly comprising: Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Office Room, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Allocated Parking Space, Communal Garden.

£495 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, HABBERLEY ROAD

This lovely unfurnished mid terraced home is located close to local shops, and minutes away from J2 of the M5, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Spacious Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, House Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Rear Garden and Off Road Parking

£495 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, SOUTHGATE

A well presented unfurnished semi detached house close to local amenities including cradley heath station offers, Large Kitchen, Lounge, Three Good Sized Bedrooms, Bathroom with No Shower, Gas Central Heating, Driveway Parking, Front and Rear Gardens, Available Immediately.

£495 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, SUTHERLAND ROAD

An unfurnished semi detached house, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Fitted Dining Kitchen with White Goods, Downstairs WC, Three Bedrooms, House Bathroom with Shower, Rear Garden, Driveway Parking

£495 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, KING STREET

Located in the heart of Old Hill, is this unfurnished first floor modern apartment, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Master Bedroom with En-Suite, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, Double Glazing, Electric Storage Heating, Bathroom with Shower, Allocated Parking Space

£475 PCM



HALESOWEN, HAGLEY ROAD

An immaculately presented ground floor one bedroom flat, within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre, briefly comprising of: Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom with Shower over Bath, Allocated Parking Space, Unfurnished.

£450 PCM



WOLLASTON, SHERWOOD ROAD

Located a short walk from local shops and bus routes is this unfurnished first floor flat, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living/Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Separate WC, Communal Garden

£450 PCM



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Your essential guide to the world of motoring compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

John Cooper Coupe is Mini's sporty flagship

IN THE space of a decade, BMW has achieved something many thought impossible.

Since 2001 its Mini range has clocked up two million sales and is available in 90 markets around the world. Not bad for something cynics thought would be a fashion flash in the pan.

Part of that success can be attributed to the regular introduction of new bodystyles. The original three-door hatch spawned a convertible, then a 'mini' estate and more recently a full four-seat compact SUV, the Countryman.

You can now add a two-seat coupe to the list, a variant Mini executives hope will attract buyers seeking a more focused and sporty experience.

Its arrival also positions the Coupe alongside the likes of Peugeot's popular RCZ coupe, a car that's done wonders for its maker's image.

The Mini Coupe performs its duties as a halo model for the rest of the range with aplomb. Its heavily raked windscreen and low-slung profile is the most dramatic look yet for a Mini.

Although width and length dimensions are near identical to the hatch, the Coupe's height is 29mm lower. And, thanks to its equally rakish rear screen, you're left in no doubt that the Coupe is a strict two-seater. Fear not on the practicality front, though.

With a hatchback tailgate that opens to reveal a maximum volume of 280 litres plus a through-load slot into the cabin, it's on par with the estate-like Clubman. Up front there's the usual oddment spaces you'll find in any Mini.

Along with its looks, the Mini Coupe has been designed to behave a little different on the road.

With its firmer suspension set up, the Coupe has been designed to deliver a more focused experience for the keen driver. As such, there's noticeably less roll through corners and there's a greater willingness to change direction.

Character

Thankfully such changes haven't resulted in a reduction in the quality of the car's ride. Yes, it's a bit stiffer than a regular three-door hatch, but you get to keep your fillings at the end of a journey.

The trade-off is a more chuckable and engaging drive, which is what you'd expect from a two-seat coupe.

Reinforcing the car's sporty character is an engine line-up comprised of Mini's more powerful diesel and petrol units.

There's no One or One D here, as the Coupe range starts with the familiar Cooper badge and its 122 horsepower offering.

The Cooper S shares the Cooper's 1.6 petrol unit but adds a turbo to produce 184 horsepower, while the John Cooper Works variant's output from the same motor is a heady 211 horsepower.

Diesel fans can opt for the Cooper SD, which has a 2.0-litre turbo unit outputting 143 horsepower. It also offers the lowest emissions and economy performance – 114g/km and 65.7mpg respectively.

But which is the best in the real world? All the engines have proven themselves in other Mini variants, most recently the diesel in hatch, convertible and Countryman models.

There's no question that the combination of wallet-friendly economy, 143 horsepower and a substantial 225lb/ft torque make for relaxed yet brisk performance.

Overtaking is quick and safe and there's enough low down grunt to make the traffic light grand prix entertaining.

The diesel's trademark growl when pushed hard is also appealing, but if you want the performance to match the Coupe's looks, then it has to be the John Cooper Works experience.

Rapid replaces brisk when describing performance, while the diesel has been elbowed out of the impatient-sounding howl.

Like the diesel variant, the petrol needs to exercise some restraint in the wet if you don't want to light up front tyres at every junction, but in the dry the car changes direction quickly and the urgency of its engine noise encourages you

pedal a little faster on familiar roads.

Factor in a surprisingly compliant ride despite its sporty character and a short, slick manual gearshift, and the Coupe experience easily becomes a fun one.

Part of that fun comes before you've even signed the cheque.

With a plethora of options to help customise your purchase, Mini offers everything from colour-coded cabin trim, satnav, sports seats and different wheel designs to suede-trimmed steering wheels and contrasting body stripes.

Back in 2001 few independent high hopes for the brand.

From a small door handle to the rear door, every far

complete with their own personalities.

The Coupe is proof that there's plenty of life left in the brand, and its own sporty personality is genuine and infectious.



YOUR MOTABILITY OPTIONS NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD.

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ORLANDO 1.8 LS

£399

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CRUZE 1.6 LT
AUTO HATCHBACK
NIL
Advance Payment



Model shown is New Cruze
2.0 VCDi LTZ Hatchback

Model shown is Orlando 2.0 VCDi LTZ

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Vehicles shown are New Cruze 2.0 VCDi LTZ Hatchback and Orlando 2.0 VCDi LTZ. Under the Motability Contract Hire Scheme for new cars, a driver can get the use of a Cruze 1.6 LT Auto for three years by paying the Total Weekly Allowance (Nil Advance Payment) from the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance, or an Orlando 1.8 LS by paying the Total Weekly Allowance (£399 Advance Payment). For applications approved by 31st December 2011. The facilities offered are for the hire (bailment) of goods. The Motability Contract Hire Scheme is administered by Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876). City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 9HB. To qualify you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement which will be taken in lieu of the four weekly rental. Full written details, including terms and conditions, are available on request. Models shown in the thumbnails are not all UK specification and may feature optional extras at additional cost. Vehicles currently available in the UK are Spark, Cruze, Orlando and Captiva. For more information visit www.chevrolet.co.uk. All figures correct at time of going to press. Calls may be recorded and monitored for training purposes.

Official Government Environmental Data. Fuel Consumption Figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). New Cruze 1.6 LT Hatchback: Urban - 31.7 (8.9), Extra Urban - 54.3 (5.2), Combined - 42.8 (6.6). CO₂ emissions 153g/km. Orlando 1.8 LS: Urban - 29.1 (9.7), Extra Urban - 47.9 (5.9), Combined - 38.7 (7.3). CO₂ emissions 172g/km.



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Vauxhall cleans up in a fleet challenge



The V8-powered VXR8 – a clear winner on A and B roads and the motorway during the two-day event

VAUXHALL'S VXR8 super-saloon is the unlikely winner of the Fleet World MPG Marathon, with an astounding 53 per cent improvement on the combined figure.

Driven by Top Gear Online editor Chris Mooney with help from navigator, Andrew Duerden, Vauxhall's archivist and resident eco-driving expert, the V8-powered VXR8 registered 32.14mpg against a combined figure of 21mpg.

The Fleet World MPG Marathon is the UK longest-running economy driving event.

The two-day event took place in the Cotswolds this year with separate routes covering 350 miles of countryside including a mixture of A and B roads and motorway driving.

Improvement

"Andrew and I are, as they say, over the moon to win the overall best percentage improvement in the VXR8," said Mooney.

"It just goes to show that the person behind the wheel can make a massive difference to fuel costs and carbon

emissions. And, of course, that a 6.2 litre V8 is a very sensible choice of engine in the right hands."

Chris and Andrew will pick up their trophy at a presentation at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall, London tomorrow.

The VXR8 stormed back with a vengeance earlier this year, packing heavily revised front and rear-end styling, a new cabin and a raft of new technology to enhance its appeal to drivers in search of one of the last, great rear-drive V8 super-saloons.



The new Seat Mii benefits from free road tax in Britain as it comes under the 100g/km barrier

Enjoy some Mii time with a compact Seat

MEET the Seat Mii – pronounced 'me' rather than 'my-ee' or 'me-eye'.

It's Seat's new city car that it's touting as a perfect runabout for young, sporty types who spend a lot of their driving time in town.

Promising "compelling practicality", "exceptional driving fun" and "high efficiency", the Mii is Seat's answer to the Volkswagen Up!, and shares its basic platform.

At just more than 3.5 metres long it will be sold as a three-door to begin with, followed by a five-door version next year. At only 854kg, the Mii is one of the lightest 'normal' cars on the road. Light weight helps efficiency, so the UK version of the Mii Ecomotive will have CO2 emissions of only 97g/km along with fuel economy of 67.3mpg.

Continental Europe, however, will get a special variant with

just 86g/km of CO2, which is only 1g worse than the current best for an internal combustion-engined car, set by the Kia Rio 1.1-litre diesel.

It's a shame Seat has no plans to make a right-hand-drive version of the lesser-emissions model. But Seat has fair reason to hold off when it will already have a Mii in this country that benefits from free road tax by being under the 100g/km barrier.

There will be two petrol engines, with 59bhp and 74bhp. Technological highlights aimed at the young audience Seat wants to capture include the Seat Portable System.

Hardly a catchy name, but the removable five-inch screen can be used as a satnav when you're on foot as well as in the car, and it has full integration into the car's phone and audio systems.

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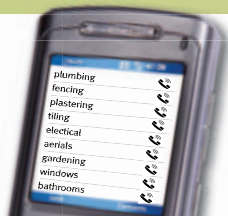
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sport

Colts grab cup victory over Kenilworth

Old Halesonian Colts 22 Kenilworth Colts 5

Old Halesonians Colts were on the road again, this time to meet Kenilworth Colts in the second round of the National Colts Cup.

Old Halesonians started strongly and after an early penalty against Kenilworth, Old Hales kicked for the corner, winning the lineout the ball was then fed to Michael Topping who drove through to score a try after three minutes, Billy Taylor was unable to add the extras.

Both sides then sought to gain superiority on the pitch, but with each conceding penalties, neither was able to dominate possession or territory.

Into the second quarter of the game Kenilworth were able to put together a sequence of plays resulting in them scoring a try on 22 minutes, which was converted.

Both sides then reverted to a sequence of conceding penalties, until on the stroke of half time, Kenilworth went for the posts and added three points to their score. Half Time

Kenilworth 10 Old Hales 5

From the restart Old Hales played really positive rugby and moved up the field looking to redress the balance of the score.

After a fine sequence of interplay, a pass was intercepted by Kenilworth, who despite an excellent chase back by Full Back Billy Taylor, were able to score a converted try.

Old Hales continued to battle hard, but were unable to cross the Kenilworth line again. A much improved performance from everyone to take into the next game at home to Whitchurch.

OLDS WIN TOUGH BATTLE AT HOME

OLD HALESONIANS 35 WALSALL 10

Old Halesonians bounced back from last week's first defeat of the season with a hard fought 35-10 bonus point victory at home against a battling Walsall side.

This was always going to be a tough encounter with both sides separated only by bonus points prior to the match.

The first 15 minutes saw the home side in ascendance with good breaks from Hadkiss, Ford, Taylor and finally Sable, who was brought down metres from the line due to good cover defence from the visitors but despite the pressure Old Hales could not find the elusive first score.

Sable again went close when he couldn't quite collect a Powell chip with the awkward bounce going back over his head. Walsall's first foray into Old Hales half ended in a penalty for the home side due to an excellent defensive effort. The mammoth kick for goal was taken by full back Hooper from the half way line and although it had the distance it cruelly rebounded off the upright into safety.

This seemed to galvanise Walsall who took advantage of Old Hales indecision in midfield to force a turn over and then a good break by centre M Coleman was halted only by a try saving tackle from Hooper. Old Hales scramble defence held up well on their own line to force the knock on and clear the ball from the resulting scrum.

Multitude

The first half continued in its scrappy nature until the half hour mark when a splendid run of play, marshalled by the diminutive Powell, saw the ball pass through many hands before captain Taylor spilt the defence to touch down under the posts, the try converted by Hooper.

The final plays of the first half culminated in Old Hales taking advantage of the visitors indiscipline with Hooper slotting home two penalties for Old Halesonians to enter half time 16-0 up.

The second half saw a much more flowing affair with Walsall putting sustained pressure on the Walsall Grove outflanks line, which was met with resolute defence. Old Hales penalty count began to creep up and they were punished when a kick to the corner led to a catch and drive line out and a deserved try for Walsall's Stuart Fitzgerald after 50 minutes which was unconverted.

The two sides traded blows in midfield before Old Hales put together a number of moves and Tom Jordan barrelled for a try under the posts. The kick was converted by Hooper to take the score to 23-5.

Submission

Old Hales were again put on the back foot by a determined Walsall which led to a penalty and yellow card for centre Hadden for what can only be described as robust play. However, playing a man down did not deter OH as they refused to be bullied into submission and a fine forward defensive effort from the home pack meant the danger passed.

Although the reprise was short lived as Walsall again attacked for all they were worth and as they were now getting into the last quarter tapped a quick penalty looking for the try. They passed wide only to be intercepted by winger Luke Smith who sprinted the length of the pitch to score, again Hooper did not miss the follow up, 30-5.

Old Hales began searching for the bonus point try but still a man down were caught out when a cheeky chip to the corner was gathered by Barry Fitzgerald, who refused to be outdone by his brother, to scoot over for a consolation unconverted try.

As the game was coming to a close Old Halesonians refused to settle and quick ball from the breakdown saw lock Ed Parry produce a side step Thorá Hird would be proud of and then with the pace of Bruce Forsyth sprinted to the corner for the bonus point win on the stroke of full time.

The final score was 35-10, taking Old Hales to third in the league with another important fixture coming up against local rivals Bournville away from home on the 22/10/2011.

Own goal sets seal on game

GIRLS LEAGUE

Kinver Colts 1 Halas Hawks 0

Despite playing some neat passing football, the U13s weren't able to unlock a dogged Kinver defence.

In a game of few chances, it was an unfortunate own goal which ultimately proved the difference, although Halas should take plenty of encouragement, as they appear to have put their poor early season form behind them.

Ferndale Park 0 Halas Hawks 8

The U14 girls gave a run out to new signing Ellie Lambrou, who linked up with Amy Blakemore to form an unstoppable striking force, with Ellie scoring a hat-trick and Amy getting four in an 8-0 win against Ferndale. The other goal came from Megan Hipkiss.

BOYS LEAGUE

Gornal 2 Halas Hawks East 5

A winning attitude and great team spirit saw the U9s East come back from an early Gornal goal to dominate the majority of the game and win 5-2.

There were tremendous shared goalkeeping performances from

Tommy Swancott and Dan Richards, along with excellent goals from Jack Whitehouse, Aston Loynes and a hat trick from man of the match, Harry Beasley.

Warstones 1 Halas Hawks West 4

A great result for the U10s West winning 4-1 against Warstones with goals from man of the match, Harry Williams (2), Joshua Wyman and Kellan Parchment on his debut.

Halas Hawks East 1 Kewford 1

The U10s East entertained Kewford East who had most of the game in the first half with Halas competing well but were one down at half time.

Halas had a lot more of the game in the second half and equalised through Rickio Fairin-Hall to earn a well deserved draw. For the second week running, the man of the match awards went to Tom Baker and Louie Jones for strong displays.

Halas Hawks West 4 Forest Falcons West 3

The U11s West started really well against Forest Falcons taking control of the game from the outset and were rewarded with a hat-trick from Josh Beasley, but falcons kept fighting and drew level before Jack MacFarlane got the winner with a well taken goal.

Man of the match went to Harvey Rutter

Halas Hawks 5 West Hagley 1

The U12s won 5-1 against West Hagley with two goals from Jonty Rutter and one each for Aseil Yafai, Ben Jeavons and Adam Bowen. Man of the match went to Nicholas Bennett.

Netherton Colts West 3 Halas Hawks 3

The U13s started slowly against Netherton conceding an early goal before drawing level through Dylan Keeling. Netherton again took the lead but the second half saw Halas playing some good football and again drew level with another Keeling effort.

Halas then took the lead with a goal from Joshua Bernard but Netherton scored a last minute equaliser to take a share of the points.

Halas Hawks 3 Ettingshall Juniors 1 A great passing display saw the U14s go a goal up against Ettingshall through Dominic Hipkiss.

Ettingshall equalized against the run of play before Hipkiss made it 2-1. Liam Holmes sealed the victory with a third goal before half time. Man of the match went to Liam Holmes.

Sil's defence holds against Halesonians

OHHC 1st XI 2 Old Silhillians 4

Old Halesonians could not break down a resilient Old Silhillians defence, in a game which was littered with controversy, leading to Hales' first loss of the season.

With passes going astray and a lack of concentration, Hales soon found themselves a goal down following an Old Sils short corner.

A spurred on Hales side then began to put pressure on the Old Silhillians goal but to no avail. And their frustration furthered when Captain Doug Houghton was sin-binned after receiving a yellow card for a high kick.

This was the first of a total of eight yellows which were issued to both sides. Being down to 10 men, Hales were hit on the counter attack just before half time when Old Sils doubled their lead to 2-0.

Hales looked like a different side and they grabbed a goal back. Utility player Chris Wattlely pounced on a loose ball following a save from the Old Sils GK after a short corner.

Man of the Match Wattlely, was first to react and he flicked the ball into the top corner, to bring the score back to 2-1.

Old Sils who found the net again following a mix-up from goal scorer Wattlely and Hales GK James Jones.

It was end to end play as they game got stretched, and Graham Knight was able to capitalise on some slack Old Sils defending to bring Hales back to within 1 goal. Old Sils grabbed the winner late on following the awarding of a controversial short corner, which was duly dispatched by the visitor's flicker.

Man of the Match, Chris Wattlely

Old Hales 2nd XI battled to their first win of the season against a tough Redditch side. Hales started nervously but took the lead before the break, with Reise Thompson setting up Ash Greaves for his first of the season.

Redditch came back in the second half and finally made one of their numerous short corners count. Hales then had periods with only 10 men with both Mike Wattlely and Jake Brooke yellow carded. Hales however, dug in and saw off the Redditch onslaught and with Brooke returning to make it 11 on 11, Hales counter-attacked and Greaves found MoM, Tom Durnford, who rocketed a shot into the roof of the net to send the away side into ecstasy.

Bloxwich 1 OHHC 3rd XI 5

Old Hales 3rd XI travelled to a Bloxwich side which have been unbeaten in the league for more than a year. Bloxwich found themselves two nil down in quick succession, both goals arriving from the stick of Nic Penn. Adam Hill scored just before half time after some excellent work by Tom Bolton. Steve Butler made it 4-0 and Penn rounded off his hat-trick after a superb assist by Matt Harrold, to give Hales a comfortable 5-0 lead. A late injury to Steve Simonds allowed a consolation goal for the home side.

OHHC 4th XI 3 Worcester 3

Old Hales 4th XI grabbed a point late on against a strong Worcester side. Jim Gurmin latched onto a through ball to power it past the Worcester keeper to salvage a point for the home side.

OHHC 5th XI 5 Olton & West Warwick 0

Hales 5th XI stormed to a 5-0 victory over Olton & West Warwick. An all round team performance allowed Hales to ease to a victory and bag their well deserved 3 points.

OHHC Ladies 1 Bromsgrove 2

Old Halesonians Ladies found themselves 2-0 down at half time following a poor first half performance. It didn't get much better in the second half for Hales who were only able to grab a consolation goal.

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Too big a mountain for Hasbury

Stourbridge Girls League

Droitwich 2

Hasbury Rangers 1 U14s

Hasbury were away to Droitwich with only 8 players again. Playing the team who are top of the league with their full squad and subs. It was a mountain to climb but the girls were up for it. Hasbury started the game full of confidence with some great passing moves. Both teams were well matched and cancelled each other out without any clear goal scoring chances. Hasbury were taking the

game to Droitwich who were content to let Hasbury attack them.

Hasbury forced a few corners which were well defended. Then with Droitwich's first real attempt on goal, saw a good strike beat Shannon Worsey at the new post for 1-0 at half time.

Second half saw Hasbury fly out of the blocks and the game came to life with both teams attacking. But it was Hasbury who struck back to equalise with a great move involving Ellis Hall, Meg Harrison and Siobhan Peplow

resulting in Becky Hurley shooting from 20 yards with a block buster of a shot for 1-1.

Hasbury were in full flow with some great stuff from Levi Cheadle who was heavily marked through out, but came close with some good efforts. Droitwich scored with a goal which looped over Shannon Worsey and came off the post for 2-1. Hasbury never stopped pushing forward but just ran out of time in the end.

Girl of the match goes to all the girls.

Tividale pays price for missed chances

ROCESTER 2 TIVIDALE 0

Tividale paid for a string of missed chances against in-form Midland Alliance side Rocester.

In the 11th minute Rocester goalkeeper Richard Froggatt made the first of several good saves when he acrobatically turned over an angled shot from full-back Joel Kettle. It took the home side 15 minutes before they troubled the Tividale defence but they should have taken the lead when a shot from Chris Sterling was palmed away by Tim Beech into the path of Chris Owen but his effort from 12 yards went high and wide. The home side took the lead a minute after the break when a swift attacking move found full back Leon Murray unmarked and he calmly side-footed home.

Rocester almost increased their lead in the 57th minute when Sterling forced a low save from Beech.

A second goal did arrive from a long punt out of defence. Beech appeared to be favourite to win the ball but he lost his footing and McMahon nipped in to lob the ball into the gaping net.

Glassboys' high five puts them into the next round

The FA Cup with Budweiser 3rd Qualifying Round STOURBRIDGE 5 EVESHAM UNITED 0

The Glassboys booked their place in the 4th and final qualifying round with a comprehensive 5-0 win over an Evesham side that ended the match with nine men after the dismissals of Wayne Daniel and goalkeeper Nathan Vaughan in the second period with Stourbridge already on course for victory.

Stourbridge were rewarded after 25 minutes when a throw-in from McConne on the right was headed on by Leon Broadhurst for an unmarked Rowe to guide a close range header beyond Vaughan.

Three minutes before the break, the Glassboys doubled their advantage when Drake scored and the visitors' hopes of getting back into the match were effectively ended in the 49th minute. Geddes from a spot-kick to make it 3-0.

Sub Josh Craddock added a 4th goal on 75 minutes when a right-wing corner from Drake was spilled by Walker to leave Craddock was left with an easy finish.

Two minutes from time Dyson's shot took a deflection past the stand-in keeper.

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